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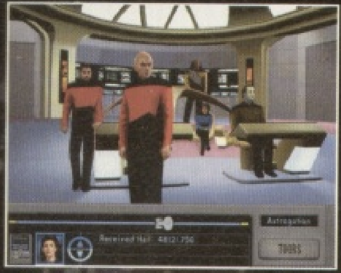
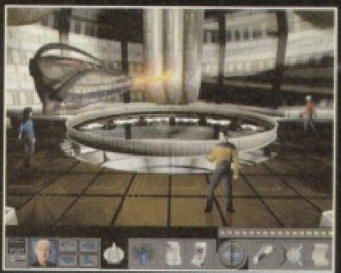
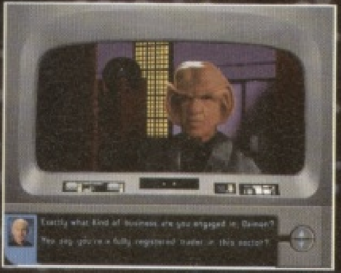


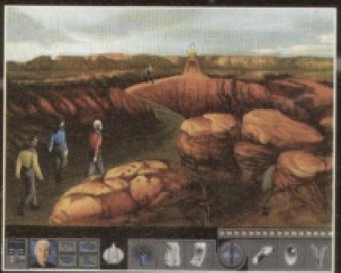
Tension boils on the bridge as another Red Alert appears imminent



Alert your Away Team and pick the right combination of talent for each critical mission



Open hailing frequencies and prepare for the unexpected



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Geez I'm tired, but before you start pouring on the sympathy, don't. The reason I'm so flaked out is because I've just returned from Los Angeles having just checked out the very latest PC software on show at the World's biggest computer entertainment show, E^3.

There was literally tons of the stuff, including the ultra-smart Rebel Assault 2 and Virgin's outrageously fast racing game, Screamer — for more information, flick to page 18 and check out our exclusive report now... hello? Is anyone there? Oh, you've all turned to page 18. I may as well sign off now. See ya next month!

Dave Upchurch
Editor.

Rebel Assault 2....................18

Star Wars. Scarcely are the words out than the saliva starts to sloosh and a glistening strand of drool drops towards the desk top like a laser searing towards a Death Star. Has LucasArts done it again? Anyone got a tissue?

WIN!
£500 worth of cyber golf gear. A-round on page 14

6 Disks!

Hey! Before you play, why not savour the helpful candy-coating we've baked around this month's yummy covermounted treats. Otherwise, these pages are a of a waste of space, really.

12 News

In the pursuit of a good story (and a free lunch) the news hungry hornblowers at the helm of the PC's liveliest sloop, plot a steady course towards Port Exclusive!

18 E^3

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away (well last month in LA any road) there was this massive exhibition. The biggest ever, in fact. One small, intrepid band of Englishmen (well, Dave) jetted stateside to get the lowdown, (er, some freebies and a bag of duty frees) and returned clutching, amongst countless other scoops, heavy stories and piercing insights, the box bearing the imaginatively entitled sequel to LucasArts' mega-selling Rebel Assault. Well done.

33 Previews

What bulky gunny-sack of things as yet unfinished is this I see before me? Could that sticky-out bit be Air Power? Surely that strategy-shaped bulge is the Bitmaps 'Z' and unless my name is Gargy Patel that great lump at the bottom has an Aliens-y thresh about it? Stand aside while we draw back the strings!

Star Trek: TNG......................50

Count the split infinitives in graphic adventure land as the bald bloke who played Aelius Sejanus in I Claudius, comes over all PC and says 'No one' instead of 'No man'. Spectrum Holobyte delivers the dilithium. Or does it?

49 Reviews

Reviews! Reviews! A lively stew of all things wonderfully new. The tongue of greatness licks a few while most are averagely hued, and some (we think it's time you knew), are tainted with the smell of poo. Ah, but here's the rub — which is which?

78 CD Updates

All the old favourites on an all-new format. A single page quite literally filled to the turning.

79 Budget Reviews

Not, thankfully, a look back at those great fiscal policy making moments with Kenneth Clarke, but a light-hearted skip through a meadow of cheap games. Hurrah!

84 Subscriptions

How a subscription to PC Games can actually prevent premature hair loss and combat the signs of aging. Sort of.

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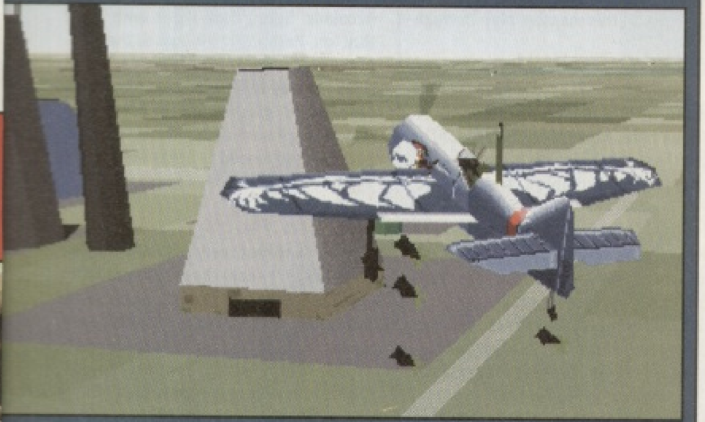
Air Power...............................34

Remember those classic Verne/Welles numbers, 'Keep Your Hands Off My Dirigible Ducky!', 'Don't Put On Yer Blimp Before the Blackout Bertie,' and 'My, What An Enormous Zeppelin, Papa!' No? Well, neither has Rowan, fortunately.



86 Power Up!
Tips, then. A nod is as good as an affirmative to a Slipstream 5000. Descent: A bird in the hand is going to be quite small. Plus! How to keep abreast of Flight of the Amazon Queen, SimTower and many more. Well, only UFO: Terror from the Deep, actually.

102 Dr Spanner's Bits & PCs
The cold but capable hands of the Cyber-GP press and prod their methodical way around the attractively tactile surfaces of all stuff extra-gameular.

106 Make It So!
And lo, there were loads of interesting Star-Trek type things available in the shops that you will want to call your very own.

109 PC GAMES Reader Survey

113 Letters
Talking to each other makes for a healthy relationship. But then again so does bean-curd. The choice is yours.

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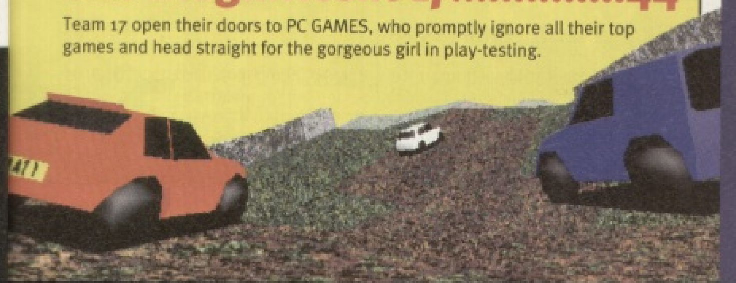
Will be August. Well, pretty well connected anyway.

The Magnificent 17..............44

Team 17 open their doors to PC GAMES, who promptly ignore all their top games and head straight for the gorgeous girl in play-testing.



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Disks!

Psst, do you wanna see some great graphics? You do? Well stick the CD in your drive and have a gander at BrainDead 13 — it looks amazing! If you've got the HD issue you're in for a treat too, 'cause we've got two huge sporting demos! Hurrah!

DISKS!

So you're after a taster of just some of the games doing the rounds on the PC at the moment? Okay, you've got 'em! Whether you're a CD user or you like to stick to your floppies, we've got the lot for you — take a look below to see what's in store!

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
Most of these demos will run on a 486/SX PC (minimum), with VGA, at least 4Mb of RAM, DOS 5.0 or greater and a mouse. However, please note that both Thunderscape and Dampier's Ice Hockey require 8Mbs of RAM to run, and that Brett Hull '95 requires a Sound Blaster or 100%-compatible soundcard.

How To Load Your Demos

In a move to make your CoverCD and HD disks friendlier than ever, we've standardised the entire thing. Now, the process for loading the games and demos is exactly the same for each.

(1) Loading From The HD Disks

Place the disk in your internal drive, and then log onto it by typing **A:**, **B:** or whatever the drive letter happens to be. Now enter **PCG** to run the disk menu. From here, it all gets easier; simply select the demo you wish to play with the cursor keys, and then press RETURN to install it. You'll be given instructions about how to run each game on the menu screen.

(2) Loading From The CoverCD

Place the CoverCD into your CD-ROM drive and then log onto it by typing **D:**, **E:** or whatever the drive letter happens to be. Now enter **PCG** to run the CoverCD menu.

Demos on the CD take one of two forms — they can either be run direct from the disk or will need to be installed onto your hard drive.The menu item itself will tell you what needs to happen with each demo. To play each of the demos, just select the item you want with the cursor keys, then press RETURN — the rest will be done for you.

In the case of a Windows game, the menu will launch Windows and run the installer for you. Bear in mind that you will need to exit Windows to get back to the main menu. Note that you must have set up a path to your Windows directory for this feature to work properly. If you haven't, go back to the DOS prompt and enter **PATH=C:\WINDOWS** before running the CoverCD menu, assuming that Windows is stored in the **C:\WINDOWS** directory.

Ultimate Soccer Manager
Impressions (HD & CD)

Impressions has always claimed some sort of inheritance to the crown when it comes to strategy games, so who better to come up with a soccer management title than the people who brought you Detroit and Rorke's Drift? However, being a strategy game, there's a hell of a lot to do, so this massive play-through should get you on your way nicely.

How To Play

The first thing to do is select your team. In this demo, you have to be Brighton, so there isn't too much of a challenge here. Now select the amount of starting capital you need. You can pick any of these, as the demo is too short for you to run into any difficulties. Enter your name when prompted, and you'll be into the game.

The first game screen you come across is the 3D view of the ground. Moving the mouse pointer around you'll find several places of interest to visit in the club, which are named at the bottom of the screen. The only place in the demo you won't be able to visit is the Training Ground.

Clicking the right mouse button at this point brings up the Fast Icon bar, which gets you round the game far faster than clicking all over the screen. Ghosted icons means that there's nothing for you to do in those locations yet, so don't waste your time.

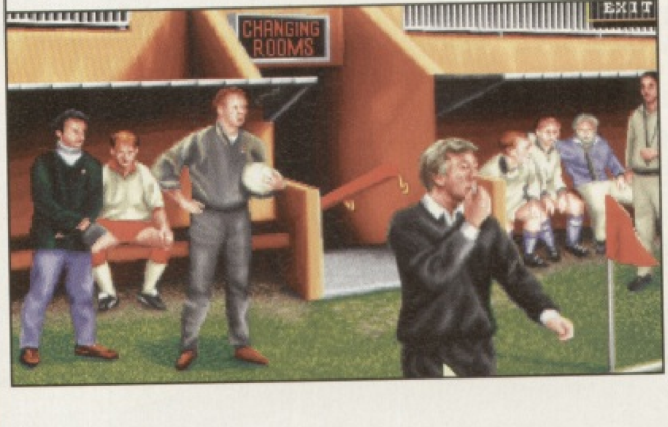
Click on the Chairman's Office, and talk to him about club sponsorship, ticket prices, advertising and anything else you can think of, and then move off to the Manager's office to check on fixtures, arrange friendlies, view player, manager and club statistics, look at the league tables and even arrange bets over the phone. Hey, you might even find a newspaper article worth reading while you're there.

The bank is the place to check your accounts and sort out loans if need be, though the bank manager can be a bit tight. But what you really want to see is the Match Day options, which you will find by clicking on the pitch on the main screen. Here you can select your team and playing style, and even view the next team you are due to play.

To select your team, take a look at their statistics (KP — Keeping; TA — Tackling; PS — Passing; SH — Shooting; PC — Pace; and FIT — Fitness). Now click on Start Match to begin the game proper.

At this point you will see the players run on to the pitch and take up their starting positions. To give individual instructions to any players, click on the SETUP button, and then on the player you want to talk to, and you will be given a list of instructions for their particular skill listing. To start the match, simply click on Kick Off!

That should show you most of the things that the demo has to offer, but just exploring should give you a more in-depth view of how the game works.

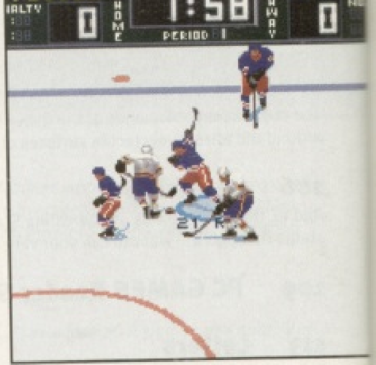


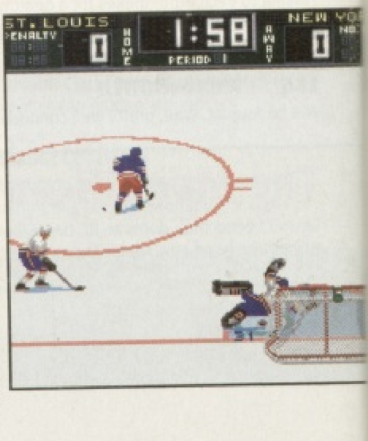
Brett Hull '95
Accolade (HD & CD)

Is it me, or is computer Ice Hockey becoming a little more popular? No sooner has Merit Software appeared with Alex Dampier's Pro Hockey than Accolade Sport comes out with Brett Hull '95. Perhaps the image of the computer games player is changing — out goes the weedy little nerd with masking tape on his glasses and in comes the super-tough nerd with masses of body-padding and a need to break into a fight whenever possible.

How To Play

This very fast, very playable hockey title couldn't really be much easier to play. If you have a joystick plugged in, the game will ask you to calibrate it when you first load up, otherwise you'll be left with keyboard control. The cursor keys move the currently highlighted player around, and SPACE is used to tackle or to pass and slapshot the puck, depending on the current status of the highlighted player.





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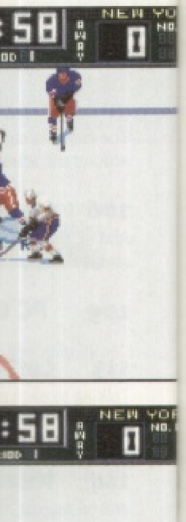
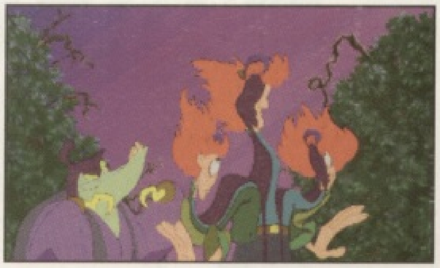


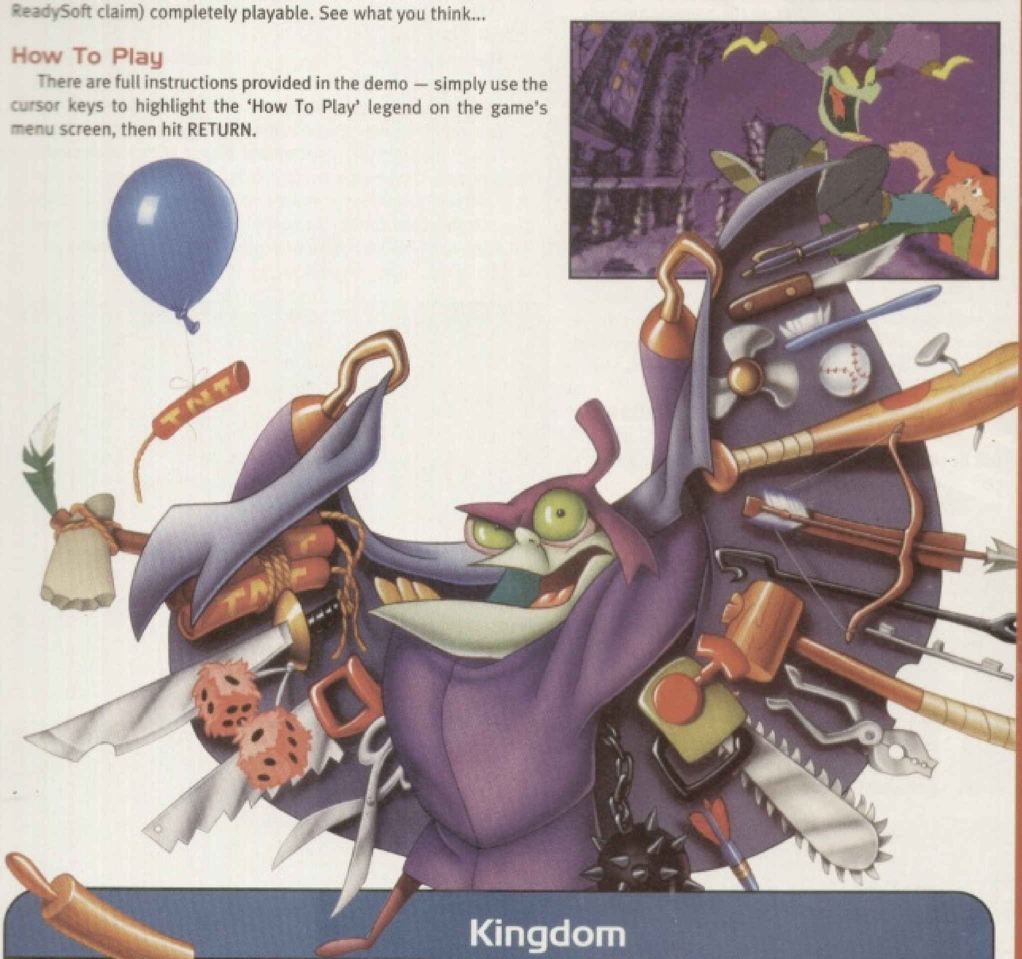
BrainDead 13
ReadySoft (CD Only)



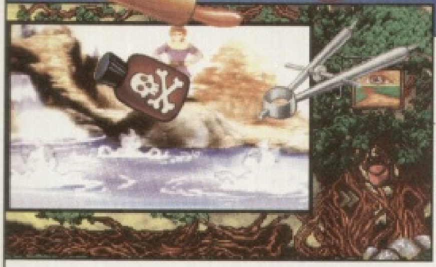
It's funny, but I remember when Dragon's Lair came out in the arcades, and everyone thought it was the best thing since sliced bread. Five minutes later, and everyone hated it for not being 'interactive' enough. Readysoft has had this criticism hanging round its neck like a boulder ever since, and now it's finally decided to try and redeem themselves. The result is Brain Dead 13 — a game that has all the cartoon animation of Dragon's Lair and its ilk, but is also (so ReadySoft claim) completely playable. See what you think...

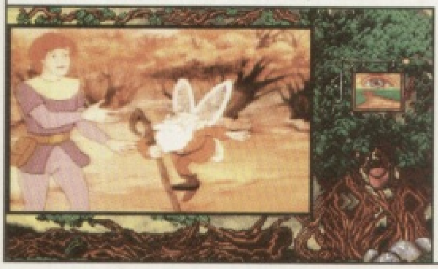
How To Play

There are full instructions provided in the demo — simply use the cursor keys to highlight the 'How To Play' legend on the game's menu screen, then hit RETURN.



Kingdom
Interplay (CD Only)





Kingdom is Interplay's latest attempt at an interactive cartoon, and damn interesting it is too. Obviously the only real way to do an interactive cartoon is to branch between animations, as Dragon's Lair does, but Kingdom does it in a much more logical way. A scene is played out, and then you are given a variety of choices to perform. The result of your efforts is then displayed, leading to more choices and so on. This demo shows the superb quality of the animation, as well as giving a good indication of how the game will work.

How To Play

The demo couldn't be much easier to play. The entire game is controlled with the mouse, so make sure you've got a mouse driver loaded. Around the main animation screen are various icons (they're named when you move the mouse pointer over them) and these give you access to your inventory and the main game map. When the animations have stopped running, move the mouse pointer over the screen to see which options you have been given. Clicking on an option with the left mouse button takes you to the next animation. What could be easier?

ALERT! ALERT!
My disk is faulty!

Due to the massive number of disks duplicated, the odd one might be a touch faulty. If you're unlucky enough to get one of these, don't despair because help is at hand. Whatever you do DON'T SEND THEM TO US! Simply send them off to the following address with an SAE for 28p:

PC GAMES Bodged Disks,
Diskxpress,
Unit 7, Willow Court,
Bourton Industrial Park,
Bourton-on-the-water,
Gloucestershire GL54 2HQ.

If you think you can solve your problems over the phone, try calling the disk helpline on **(01451) 810788**. The helpline is open between 3pm and 5pm on weekdays.

Making A Boot Disk

If you're having problems running any of this month's floppy games try making a boot disk. Take a freshly formatted floppy disk, slap it into the disk drive (I'll assume it's drive A for the moment) and type: **SYS A:**. The system files will be transferred and within seconds you'll have a fully-functioning boot disk on your hands.

All you then need to do is leave the floppy in the disk drive, reset your PC and finally try loading the game again. Don't take the disk out of the machine as it boots up because you want the PC to read the information from the floppy rather than the hard disk.

What the... HELP!

All these demos require 4Mb of Expanded (EMS) memory to run and at least 590K of free base memory, except where stated otherwise in the System Requirements panel opposite. If you have this, not Extended memory (XMS), they shouldn't cause you any problems whatsoever.

● Except where specified, these demos do not work under Windows and may not be compatible with Doublespace, QEMM 386 or Stacker disk compression software.

The Fine Print Bit...

The PC GAMES coverdisks are rigorously checked for viruses, but coverdisks are used at the reader's own risk. PC GAMES can accept no responsibility for damage to either data or hardware caused by using the coverdisks.

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Thunderscape
SSI (CD Only)

SSI has carved itself a bit of a niche in the role-playing game market. Indeed, it's hard to think of anyone who produces more top-quality hack-'n'-slashers than it does. Thunderscape is the company's latest effort, and it looks set to be a corker. It's quite different to RPGs that you may have played before — in a nice way, obviously, although we're still a bit unsure about the 'rave'-style soundtrack thumping away in the background. Who knows? Perhaps you'll like it...

How To Play

The game is controlled with either the mouse, or the following keys on the numeric keypad:

9	**Moves the party forward and to the right.**
8	**Moves the party forward.**
7	**Moves the party forward and to the left.**
6	**Turns the party to the right.**
5	**Moves the party backward.**
4	**Turns the party to the left.**
3	**Side steps the party to the right.**
2	**Moves the party backward.**
1	**Side steps the party to the left.**
*	**Jumps the party in the direction they are heading.**

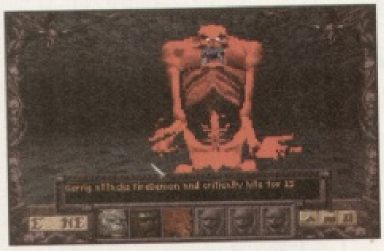
To play with the mouse, hold down the right mouse key and the cursor will change from a sword to an arrow. Keep the button held down and move the mouse in the direction you want the party to move, and away you go.

Along the bottom of the screen are three main icons, which are:

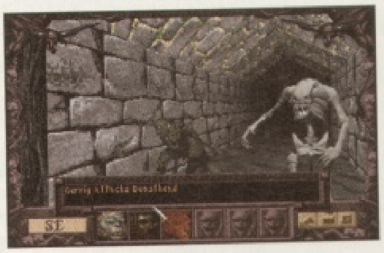
● Disk and Triangle — When either is clicked using the sword icon, you will be taken back to the main menu.

● Chest — When this is clicked on you will be taken to the character screen. A simple left click on the exit button to get back into the game.

For further playing instructions, check the **README.TXT** document in the **THUNDER** directory on your hard drive.



Gerrig attacks firedemon and critically hits for 15



Gerrig attacks Deadhead

Star Trek: A Final Unity
MicroProse/Spectrum Holobyte (CD Only)

"Is this the Earth quality you call love?". Okay, so it's not the right Star Trek era, but you can't write anything about Star Trek without starting with a cliché! This non-interactive demo shows just a snippet of what to expect from the all-singing, all-dancing Microprose licence extravaganza, so just select it from the menu, sit back and watch the fun!

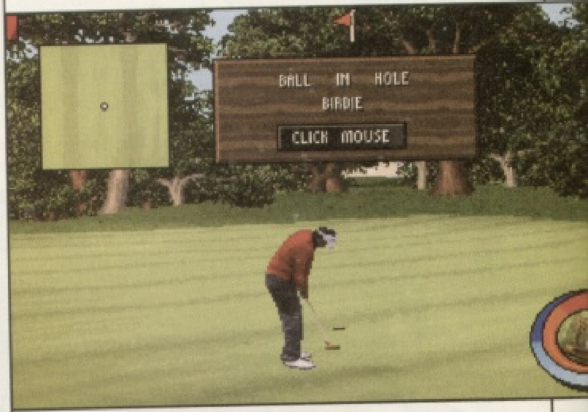
Fairway To Heaven
GameTek (CD Only)

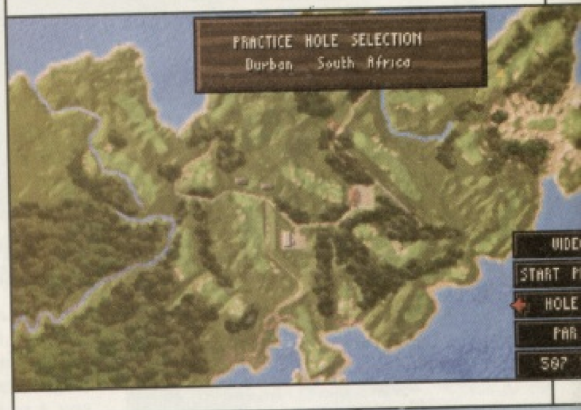
You may have seen demos of this on other mags, but chances are they were from the floppy version of the game. This, however, is the all new and exciting CD-ROM version of the game, with improved sound and graphics. Now experience the thrill of a good Sunday walk spoiled with a bag of sticks in the comfort of your own bedroom/office/den/whatever.

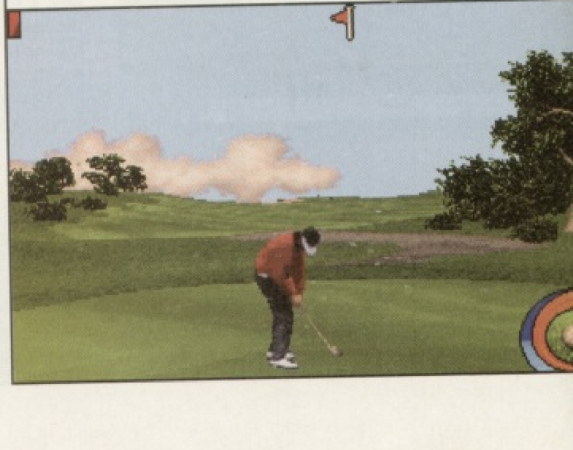
How to Play

The whole game is played with the mouse, using the drop-down menus at the top of the screen to select the sort of game you want to play. Once you've done this,then it's out to the tee.

Fairway To Heaven uses the now-standard golf game control system. Hold down the right mouse button to set your power, then release it when the power bar reaches the point you want it to. After a moment, the hook and slice bar will swing across the bottom of the control icon on the bottom right of the screen. Click the right mouse button when it is dead centre, and the shot will be taken. Enjoy yourself.







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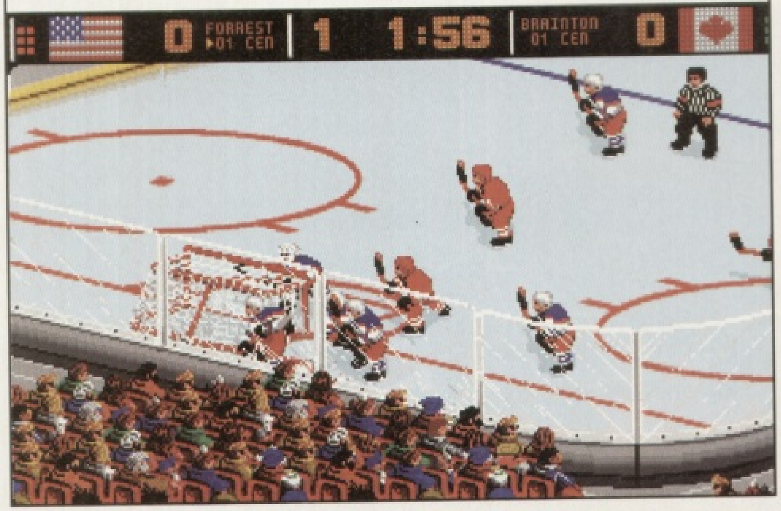
Alex Dampier's Pro Hockey
Merit Software (CD Only)

Merit's Alex Dampier Pro Hockey is an isometric-3D scrolling sports sim along the lines of EA's FIFA Soccer — and the good news is that it's as blood-thirsty, violent and fun as you would expect a game of ice hockey to be!

How To Play

When the game loads, you can set the controls to match your system. If you have a joystick, you will be prompted to calibrate it on startup, otherwise you can set your control keys and get on into the game!



Virtual Pool
Interplay (CD Only)

There was a time when Archer Maclean was the only king to the 3D snooker and pool crown. His titles were as perfect as you could get, apparently. But here's Interplay to prove him wrong, with their incredible new title that's faster, smoother, more playable and even features a full virtual pub to play in.

This demo lets you play a two-player match against a human opponent, on the same machine or via a modem link, using the standard US 9-Ball rules (hit the lowest ball on the table, the winner is the person who sinks the highest ball) but with only four balls on the table. Other than that, there is practically nothing disabled in this demo.

How To Play

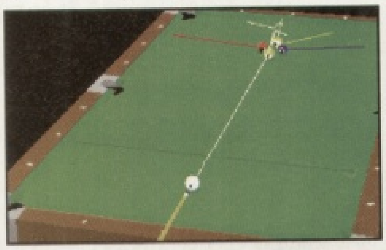
The game is played with a combination of mouse and keyboard, and features full instructions from the menu which can be brought up with the ESCape key. But for those who want to get stuck right in, here is the quickest way to take a shot:

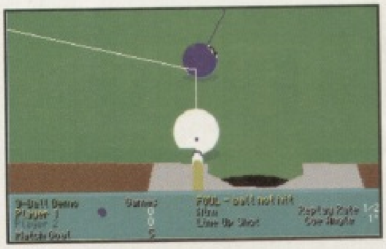
(1) When you start the game, you will be in Aim mode. Move the mouse around to change your aim on the white ball. Line up with the pack of balls at the other end of the table, and then hold down the S key to go into Shot mode.

(2) Now draw the mouse back towards you, and you will see the cue draw back on screen. Move the mouse pointer forward and you'll see the cue do likewise. When you are ready, slam the mouse forward as though you were actually holding a pool cue, and the white ball should go shooting across the table.

(3) To view the shot again, press the R key to replay the shot and move the mouse around to view the table from any angle.

(4) If you're having any trouble, then hitting the T key turns on tracking mode, which shows you in advance where all the balls will go when struck. How much easier do you want it?





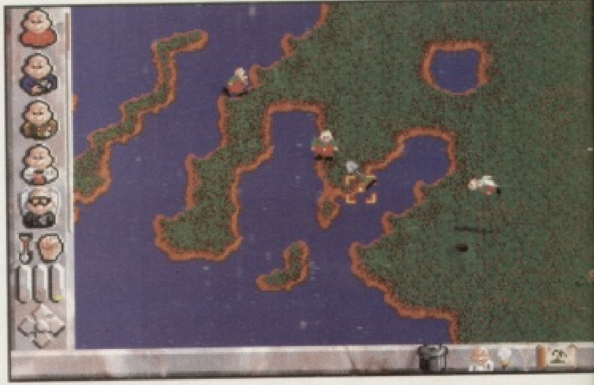
Baldies
GameTek (CD Only)

Having found a sizeable gap in the market, GameTek are proud to announce the first game for the follicly challenged. Combining the strategy of Populous with the humour of Lemmings, Baldies casts you as God. Well, not *the* God, but a minor deity nonetheless.

Anyway, as an all-powerful being in this one-level demo you have the ability to control the horde of hairless heroes, assigning them different tasks to perform and inventions to make. With these stashed in your inventory it's time to attack the enemy, a similar bunch of slapheads wearing different coloured dungarees.

How To Play

For full instructions on how to play Baldies, choose the 'READ FILE' option from the installation menu — it tells you far more than we ever could.

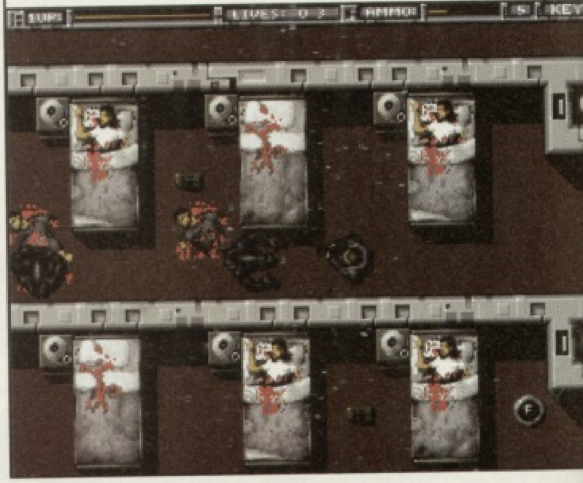


Alien Breed: Tower Assault
Team 17 (CD Only)

Team 17 built their reputation with the massively playable Alien Breed, and then the even more playable Alien Breed 2. Rather than being a sequel, Tower Assault is an extension of the second game, with some new features but mainly all the fast and furious gameplay of the original. This demo features one of the levels from the civilian sections of the game, and is not for the faint hearted!

How To Play

The main character is controlled using the cursor keys, with SPACE firing your weapon and CTRL putting you into defence mode, where you walk backwards instead of forwards. Easy? You wait until you play it!



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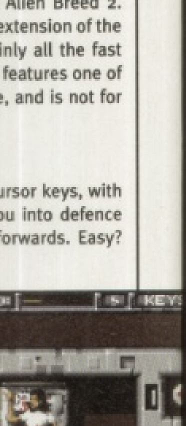

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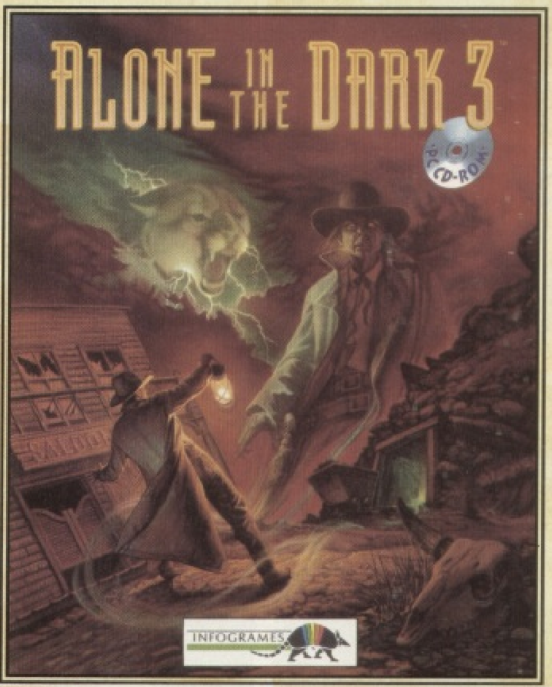

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GT Gets Serious

Recently-formed GT Interactive Software (Europe) has demonstrated that it means business by signing a long-term agreement with coin-op giant Williams, the company responsible for many of the recent big-name arcade games such as Mortal Kombat II and NBA Jam.

The deal gives GT the rights to release PC conversions of coin-ops released after April 1st 1995, of which the most exciting is the eagerly-waited Mortal Kombat 3, pencilled in for a Summer release.

GT's European Financial and Commercial Director Hilary Cranny is obviously excited by the deal, which several major publishing companies were believed to be fighting for. "After less than a month in business, this contract immediately establishes GT as a major publishing force in Europe."

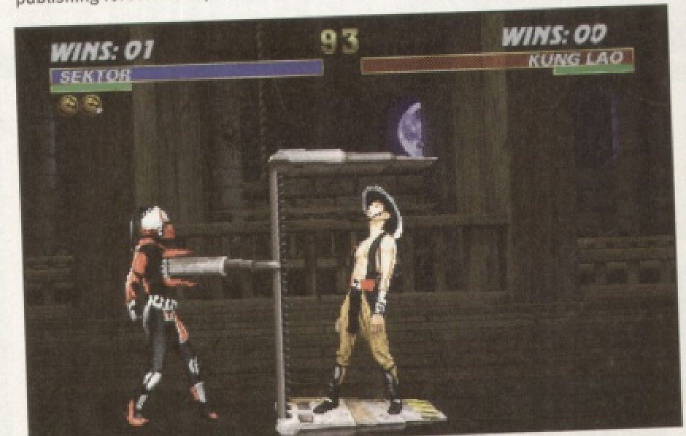
Indeed it does. For within those few short weeks, GT has established an impressive portfolio, which also includes the publishing rights for at least the next two iD games, namely Heretic and Quake.

Developing wunderkind Probe has previously been responsible for converting the Mortal Kombat series to PC (with remarkable success, it has to be said), but it is believed that Williams' team of in-house programmers will take charge of all future conversions. Although its track record is unproven, a close working relationship with the arcade coders will no doubt prove to be an invaluable advantage.

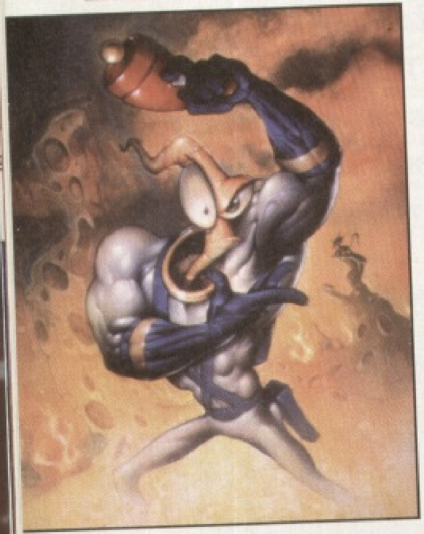
Mortal Kombat 3 promises to be the bloodiest of the ultra-gory series. There are three more characters, and tons of hidden codes that enable you to alter the way the game plays. And there's a new 'Amimality' finishing move that mutates your defeated opponent into a animal.

The first official release from GT will be The Ultimate Doom pack, the first ever commercial release of the original classic blaster Doom, with an additional episode (comprising of at least three brand new levels) entitled: Thy Flesh Consumed.

These extra levels will be the newest genuine iD creations, having been constructed some time after Doom II's. A price-point of below £30 is expected, and a release planned for June-ish.



WHAT DO THESE TWO HAVE IN COMMON ?



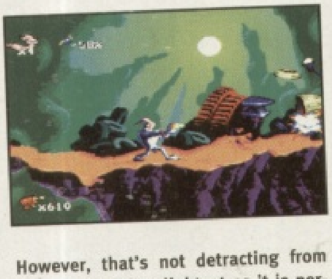
It's a Game, Jim — But Not As We Know It

In a major licensing coup, Activision has signed the PC conversion rights for the phenomenally successful console-smash Earthworm Jim, and will be releasing a Windows '95 version towards the end of the year.

Although Earthworm Jim is a platform game, it oozes style and humour. You play an earthworm called — yes! — Jim who stumbles upon a special 'space suit' that gives the wriggly creature arms and legs. The game is spread across several huge scrolling levels interspersed with numerous sub-games, and each is peppered with some of the most original enemies ever seen in a game of this ilk.

The animation has to be seen to be believed — and this is surprise when you consider that the game is the lovechild of Shiny Entertainment, headed-up by Dave Perry, the talent behind Virgin's Aladdin and Cool Spot.

We haven't seen a running version yet, but it's unlikely the PC version will differ from the console incarnations as, aside from the flashy animations, there's little technical wizardry. However, that's not detracting from the game in the slightest as it is perhaps the most playable platformer we've seen in a long while.



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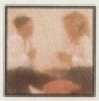
Ooh... Saucy!

We only usually feature multimedia products in News if they are (a) interesting and (b) come complete with copious amounts of luvverly breasts. The Pleasures of Sex applies to both.

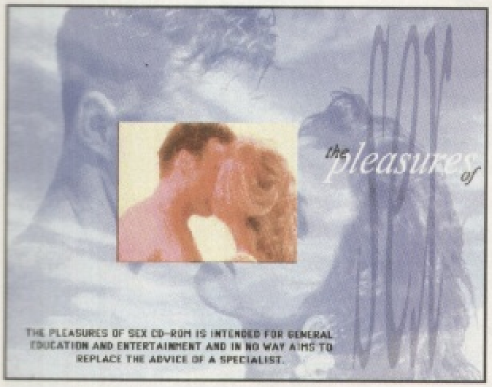


Basically, it's a Shag Manual, detailing every element of physical relationships between a man and a woman. For the uninitiated (and just because we like the words) these include foreplay, erogenous zones, orgasms and stimulation. Hee-hee.

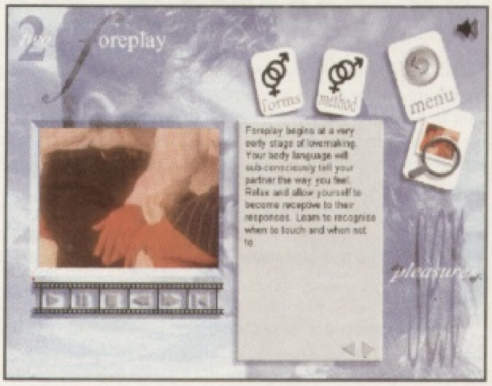
But perhaps the most interesting section focuses on exploring different positions. But because this is a family CD-ROM, 'On Top of Dave' is just too damn degrading to feature.

Telstar Electronic Studios Managing Director Mark Livingstone reckons: "The Pleasures of Sex is innovative and explicit, but delivers important messages to mature couples. It deals with the issues of sex in the nineties, which involves AIDS, but also deals frankly with the more enjdyable side of sex!" Oh, that's good.

Now these supa-saucy CD-ROMs are all very good, but until a member of PC GAMES' editorial team loses his virginity and stops sniggering about this kind of stuff, their authenticity cannot be verified. Any offers of practical lessons, please? (Only female readers need apply, by the way.)



THE PLEASURES OF SEX CD-ROM IS INTENDED FOR GENERAL EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT AND IN NO WAY AIMS TO REPLACE THE ADVICE OF A SPECIALIST.



Foreplay begins at a very early stage of lovemaking. Your body language will sub-consciously tell your partner the way you feel. Relax and allow yourself to become receptive to their responses. Learn to recognise when to touch and when not to

Going Live in '95

Following the success of Live '94, Earls Court will once again play host to the hottest names in the gaming arena — and PC GAMES will be there!

Live '95 will run from 19-24th September 1995 and EMAP Images, publishers of PC GAMES, PC Review and C&VG, will once again look after those whose main interest is computer games by sponsoring an area where punters will be able to try out the hottest titles and compete in special challenges. And prizes better than last year's bags of crisps are promised for the winners.

The format for the show is still undecided, but PC GAMES will be there, so you'll be able to chat with the team and see for yourself the world's largest man.

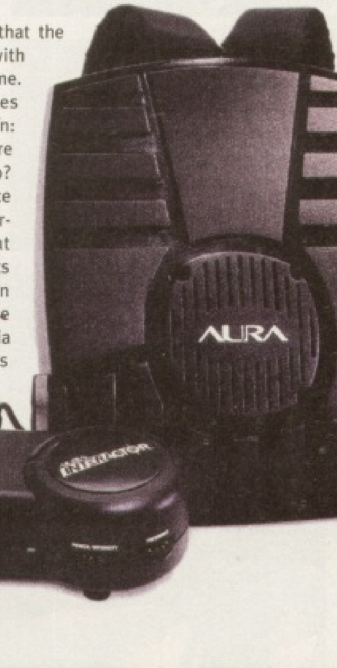
We'll bring you more concrete information as the event draws closer, but set aside a day or two in September to ensure that you are where the action is.

PC Games Hurt — And That's Official!

Aura Systems, Inc. has designed what has to be the most damaging piece of hardware the PC world has ever seen. The Aura Interactor is a Virtual Reality vest that is compatible with almost any game system, but it has been pioneered on the PC.

Once the user slips the contraption on, punches, explosions and gunfire is simulated with the aid of body-pulsing vibrations using the same technology employed by the US military — presumably when its soldiers are practising playing Doom or something.

This method ensures that the vest is compatible with almost any computer game. But this technology does raise a concerning question: how realistic are hardware manufacturers willing to go? Will we see vests the slice you up when someone performs a Mortal Kombat death move? Will your guts explode when shot at in Doom? Or will you finally be able to get to grips with Tia Carrere in The Daedalus Encounter? Let's hope so!



Team **Talk**

Who are the geezas who write PC GAMES? And just what or who has taken their fancy this month? All is revealed below...

David Upchurch

Editor

Again Dave cleverly avoided doing any real work by swanning of to the E^3 computer show in the States. We heard it was one long party, but he claims it was a real grind — which perhaps explains why he woke up every morning with a raging headache and feeling nauseous.

Alex Simmons

Reviews Editor

While the fat's away, the mice will play — and how! Alex had a great time this month as he was allowed to travel up to Yorkshire and check out Team 17's top line-up of new games in development (normally Dave would be the one to go on the good trips like this, you see).

Dave Kelsall

Art Editor

Being a bit of a drink-loving barfly, 'our' Dave was particularly taken by Interplay's excellent Virtual Pool. So why exactly do you like it so much, Dave. "I don't know," he muttered in reply,"because it's good." Hmm, you're wasted, Dave — you should be a reviewer.

Pete Barrell

Designer

Poor old Pete doesn't get his cute chops on the Team Talk that much — which is a pity, because he's great. So what, er, 'took your fancy' this month, Pete? "Oh, Widget Workshop, definitely — I 'm going to use it to make my own Lottery predictor and win *millions*." Yeah, right.

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INFO BULLETS

❍ **Bruce Smith Books has just published the ultimate SimCity 2000 bible, which reveals the best way to create a successful city. Secrets Of Sim City 2000, written by Andrew Banner, tackles every aspect of the game, and even lists a few ways to cheat your way to the top. It's out now, price £9.95**

❍ **Electronics giant Sony has made its first move into the quad-speed CD-ROM market with the launch of two new drives. Promising technical innovation, at a price you can afford, you can expect to shell out £119 and £139 (ex. VAT), depending on the specifications you require. Contact (0181) 760 0500 for more information.**

❍ **U.S. Robotics has launched an internal PC half-card version of its budget-priced V.34 modem, the Sportster 28,800, which operates at data speeds of up to 28,800bps and has auto-dial, auto-answer and call progress detection capabilities. It costs £299. Now isn't that interesting?**

❍ **Stop Press! In a surprise move, Interplay has bought Shiny Entertainment (the people who did Earthworm Jim) for an undisclosed (but probably huge) sum of money. All future games developed by Shiny will now be published by Interplay, although the PC version of Earthworm Jim will still be published by Activision.**

❍ **Intelligent Games, the people responsible for the strategy sim Ticonderoga and the forthcoming Maxis game, SimIsle, are working on a new 3D game called Raptor, which centres around the adventures of a futuristic archaeologist. It will be published by Mindscape this Autumn.**

❍ **Electronic Arts has set up its own Home Page on the World Web, containing hot news about all EA products. If you fancy having a gander, its location is:**
http://www.ea.com/ratings.html

And The Winners Are...

The results for the prestigious EMAP Images Golden Joysticks Awards, which were held on the 4th of May, are just in — and here they are (well, the ones relevant to PC owners, anyway), hot off the presses. Remember, you, the games-playing public, voted for these, so this is a true and accurate indication of what the punters think, and not some industry big-wigs who wouldn't know a great game from their arse.

Best Computer Advertisement
Rise Of The Robots — *Mirage*

Best Multimedia Game
Wing Commander III — *Origin*

Best Computer Strategy/Simulation
Theme Park — *Bullfrog*

Best Adventure Games
Beneath A Steel Sky — *Virgin*

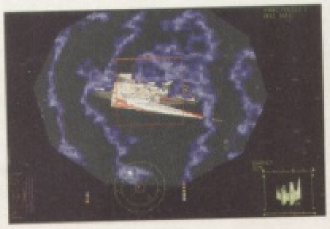
Best Original Computer Game
Theme Park — *Bullfrog*

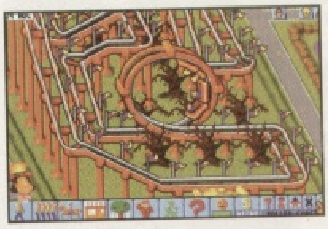
Computer Game Of The Year
Doom II — *Virgin*

Best Computer Programmer
Bullfrog

Services To The Software Industry
Probe Software

Software House Of The Year
Electronic Arts





CHARTS

Top 10 PC Games

1. X-COM: Terror From The Deep
MicroProse

2. Discworld
Psygnosis

3. Premier Manager 3
Gremlin Interactive

4. Aladdin
VIE

5. Defender Of The Empire
LucasArts

6. Transport Tycoon Editor
MicroProse

7. The Lion King
VIE

8. KA-50 Hokum
VIE

9. X-Wing Triple Pack
US Gold

10. Desert Strike
Gremlin Interactive

Top 10 CD-ROM Games

1. Discworld
Psygnosis

2. X-COM: Terror From The Deep
MicroProse

3. Dark Forces
LucasArts

4. Star Trek: TNG Demo
MicroProse

5. Descent
Interplay

6. X-Wing Collector's CD
LucasArts

7. US Navy Fighters
Electronic Arts

8. Transport Tycoon
MicroProse

9. Magic Carpet
Electronic Arts

10. Desert Strike
Gremlin Interactive

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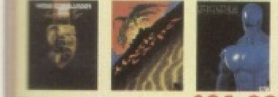

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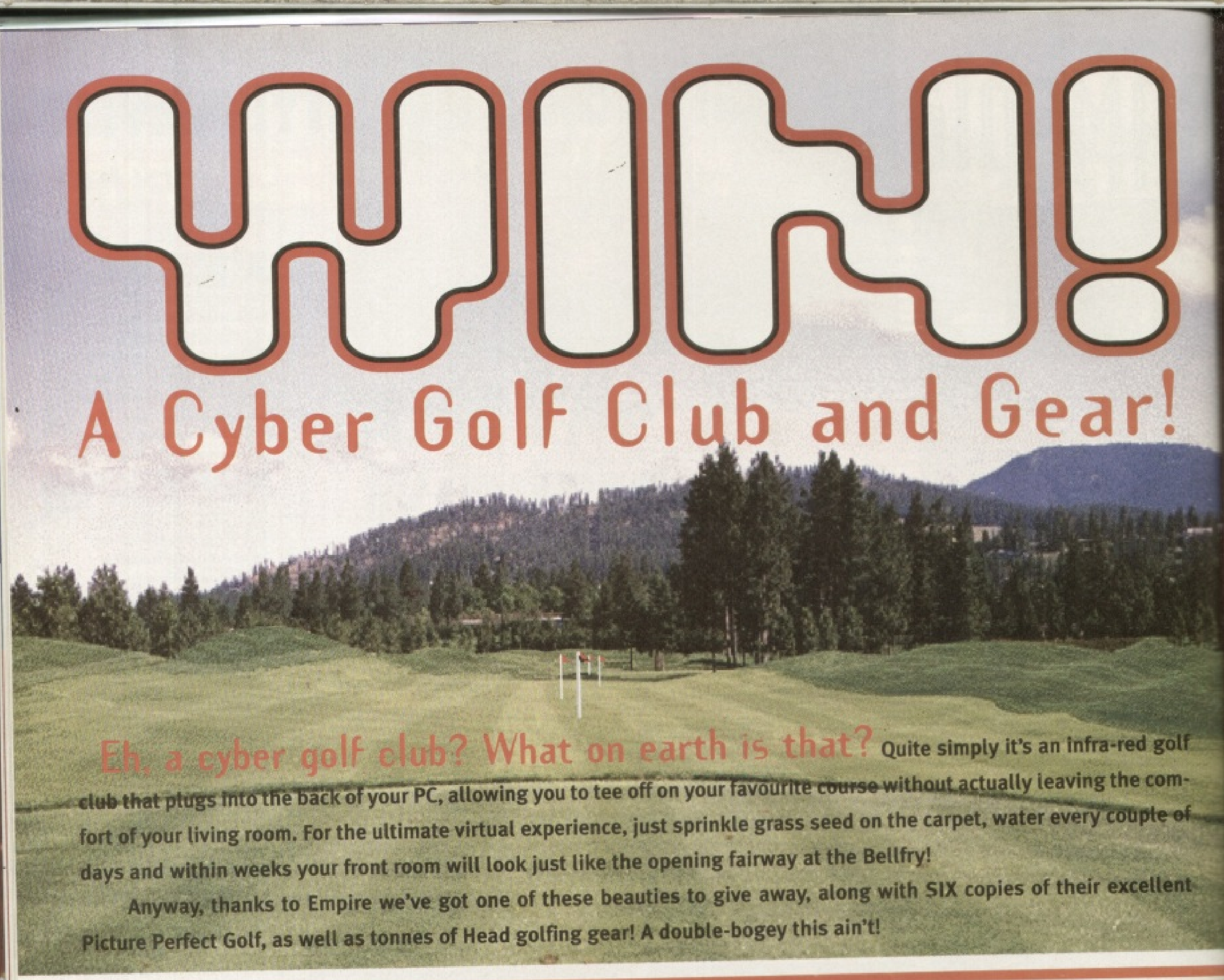

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All entries must arrive by the 6th of July 1995, when the lucky winner and five runners-up will be picked by Seve Ballesteros from Nick Faldo's golf bag. Good luck!

The Questions

1. What's the golfer's term given to finishing a hole one under par?
   - (a) A Bogey
   - (b) A Birdie
   - (c) An Albatross

2. Generally speaking, what is the best club to use when playing a bunker shot?
   - (a) Sand Wedge
   - (b) Pitching Wedge
   - (c) Sandwich

3. An easy one to finish. How many holes is a round of usually golf set over?
   - (a) 1.8
   - (b) 18
   - (c) 180

This competition is not open to employees of EMAP Images or Empire Software, or any of their friends and relatives. The competition closes on the 6th of July, and all the winners will be notified shortly after. No alternative prize will be offered, the Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Only one entry per household. While every care is taken, we cannot accept responsibility for any entries lost in the post.

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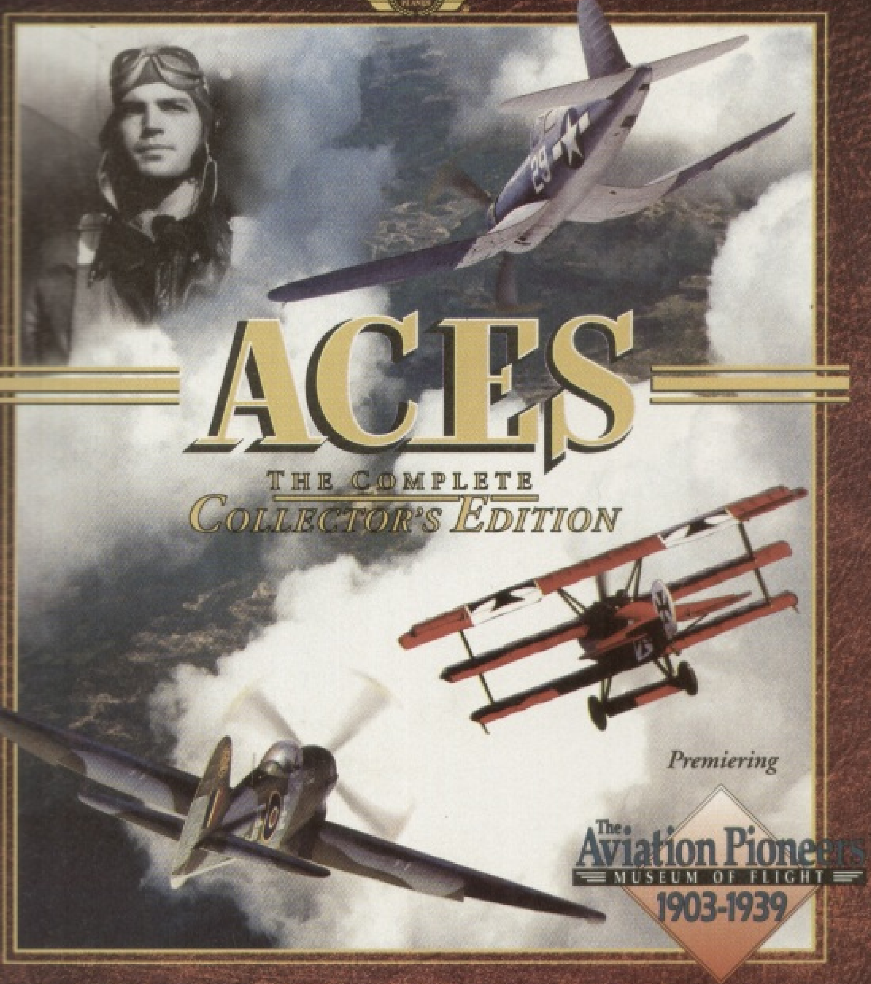

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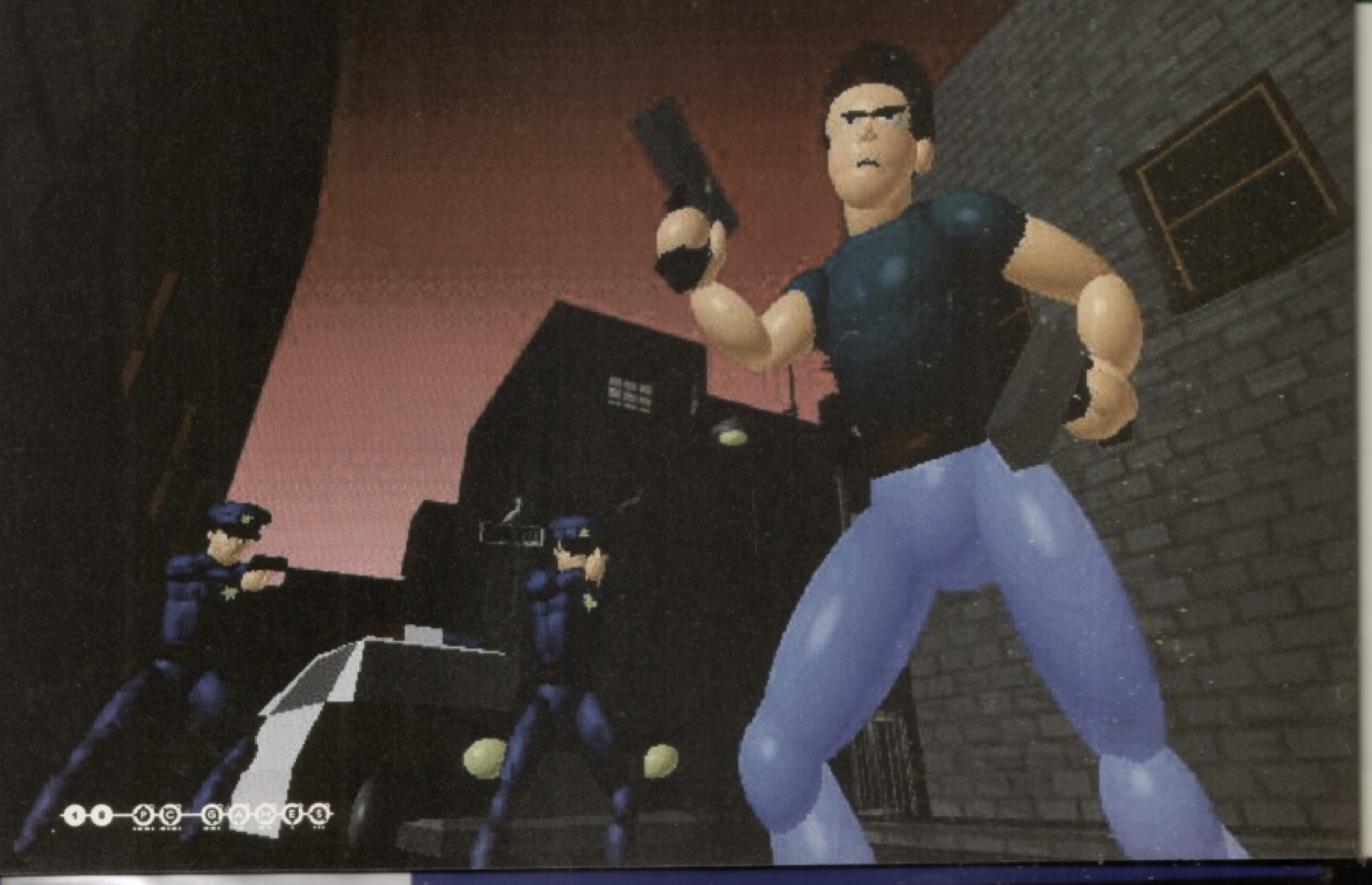
E^3

It's said that they do things bigger in the States. And if you needed some sort of proof to back up that old cliche, then you need only look at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (or E^3, to give it its trendy acronym).

Held in Los Angeles from 11th-13th of May, E^3 is where software publishers and developers from around the world gather to display their wares. The only thing remotely comparable to it is the ECTS, which is held in London every Spring and Autumn; comparable, that is, in everything except size and scale — E^3 is roughly three times bigger than the ECTS.

Although many publishers were expressing interest in the Saturn and PlayStation 'next generation' consoles, in terms of the number of games on display the PC was easily the star of the show. And when I say PC I mean PC CD-ROM — you could count the number of PC floppy games scheduled for release on one finger.

Over the next ten pages you'll find a comprehensive overview of what was at the show. Although there weren't any amazingly different or original games on view, there were lots of very good quality ones — and most of them seemed to be sequels for some reason. We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed writing it...



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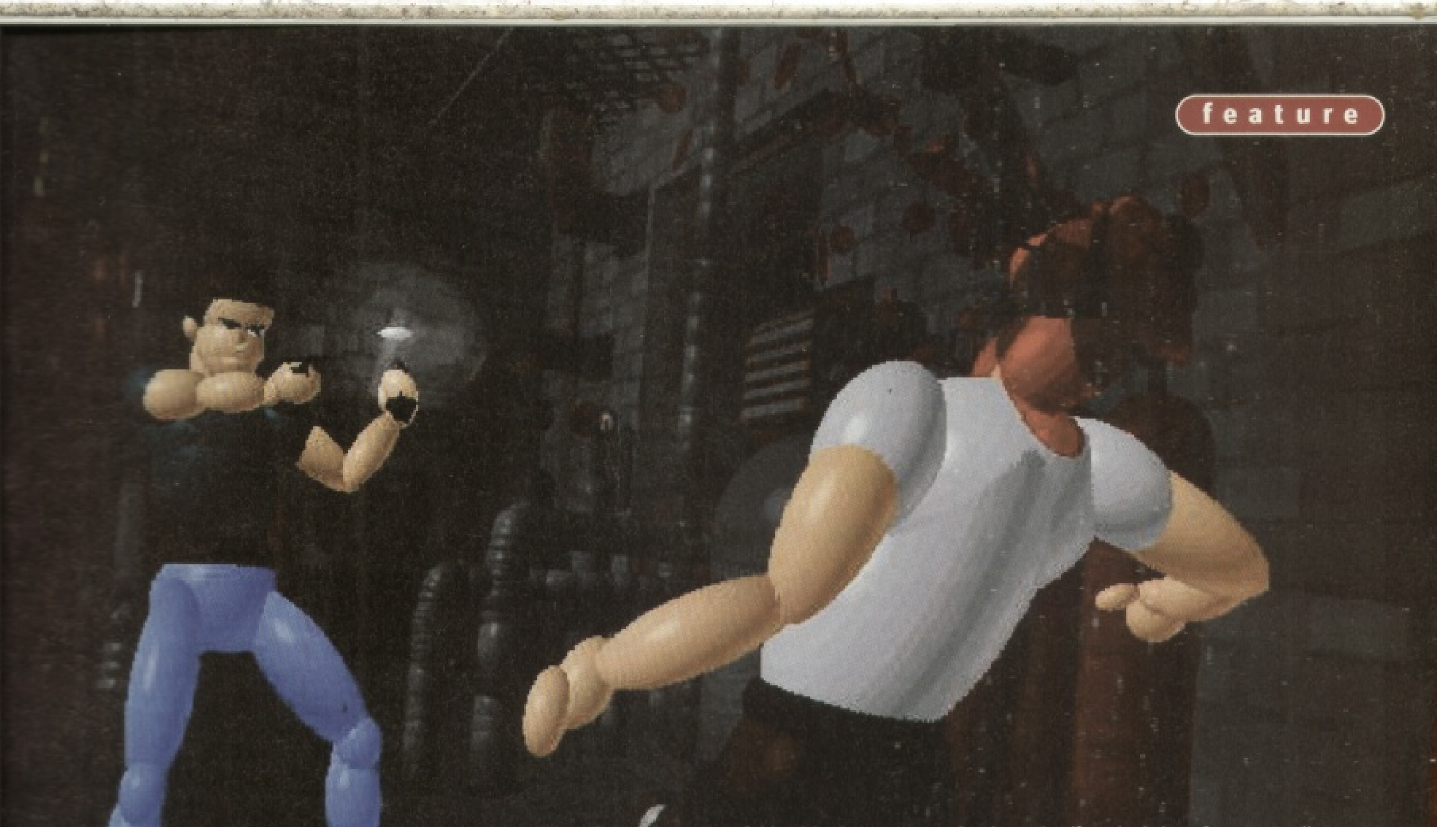


Urban Decay

Psygnosis/Andrew Spencer Studios

The future is full of possibilities. One day a mad scientist might splice together the genes of Quentin 'Pulp Fiction' Tarantino and John 'Hard Target' Wu. And then someone might use the resulting mix to create a human baby. And then that baby might grow up to be a hugely-gifted games programmer. And if all that was ever to happen, then — and only then — would we be likely to see a game more violent than Urban Decay.

Urban Decay's scenes of blood-letting are so graphic that they're likely to offend and sicken even the most liberal and tolerant of people. Which is A Good Thing, we reckon — we're fed up with nancy games designed to please everyone from "8 to 80", as the old cliché goes.

Created by the same people behind the excellent — if all-too-brief — Ecstatica, Urban Decay uses an vastly-enhanced version of that game's 'ellipsoid polygon' 3D technology. The most significant improvement is that the action can now take place in SVGA. It's also possible for scenes to have different levels, so that if you look down from a catwalk you can see people below.

With Urban Decay still a year or so from completion, much of the game's plot is still subject to change. At the moment it centres around a lone man's battle for justice against the police and the street gangs in a rundown metropolis. However, as long as it stays ultra-violent, it could be about stamp collecting as far as I'm concerned. Urban Decay was my personal 'Star Of The Show'; look out for it — it's going to be absolutely *massive*.

● *Urban Decay will be released in Summer 1996.*

High Octane

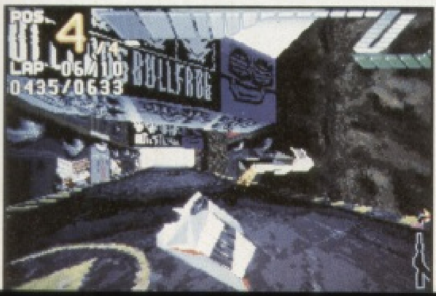
Bullfrog

E3 was full of surprises but perhaps the biggest came from Bullfrog. The Guildford super-coders unveiled High Octane, yet another new game — no surprises there, admittedly — but the twist here is that it's due for release not this Xmas, not this Autumn but *next month*.

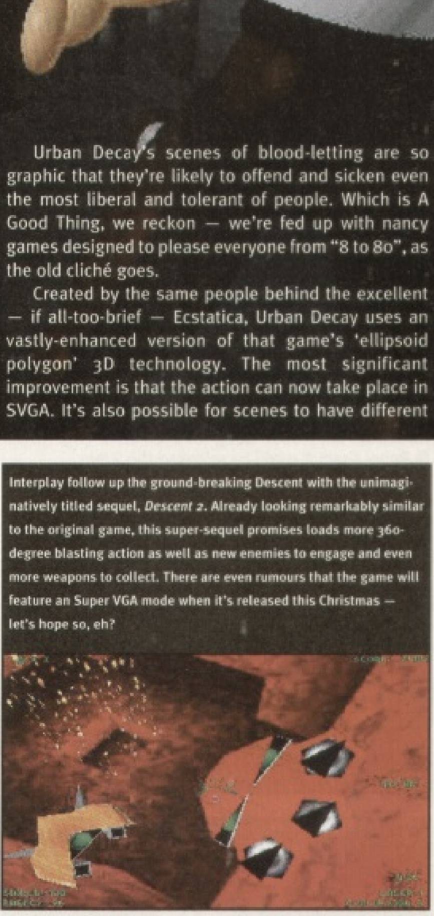
Essentially High Octane is a futuristic racing game in which up to 12 players (over a network, naturally) crash, smash and bash their way around strange alien landscapes in a desperate attempt to become top of the racing league. The game features six different hover vehicles to drive in all, each with their own unique handling techniques, armour thicknesses and weapons mountings.

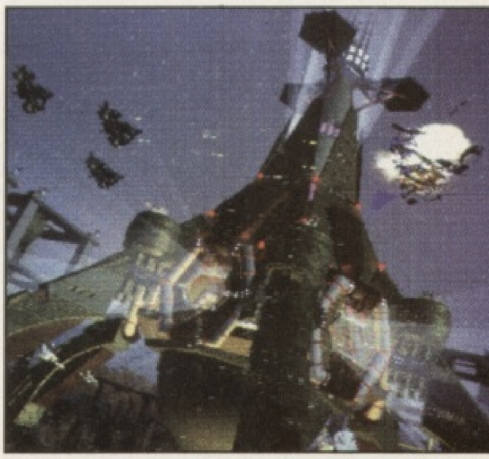
True, unlike most Bullfrog games, High Octane couldn't be said to be bursting with originality, but what it does have the bucket-load is (a) speed, and (b) playability. The exhilaration produced by searing around a hairpin bend at 200mph is extreme, to say the least.

● *High Octane will be released this June.*



Interplay follow up the ground-breaking Descent with the unimaginatively titled sequel, *Descent 2*. Already looking remarkably similar to the original game, this super-sequel promises loads more 360-degree blasting action as well as new enemies to engage and even more weapons to collect. There are even rumours that the game will feature an Super VGA mode when it's released this Christmas — let's hope so, eh?





The Hive

Trimark

One of the prettiest games at the E^3 show was The Hive, an animation-rich CD game that publishers Trimark confidently predict will "create a buzz among gamers". (And who said that Americans don't have a good sense of humour?) It's a 3D shoot-'em-up along the lines of Chaos Control, in that you're guided along a pre-rendered flight path and have to pick off the enemy — mutant bees called Hivasects — as they whizz by.

The twist here is that, unlike Chaos Control, the enemy appear randomly, so success is not just a case of remembering where the bugs appear and pointing the cursor there. The Hive also boasts what Trimark call "Panoractive sequences", which allow the player to look around as well as up and down from a fixed point.

David Localio, Trimark's VP of Sales and Marketing, was so enthusiastic about The Hive that he remarked: "We are proud to unveil a CD-ROM title that fully explores the action/arcade game genre." Boy — he certainly knows how to generate a bit of hype, doesn't he?

● *The Hive will be released this October.*

feature

E^3 in brief

● Many softcos took the opportunity of E^3 to showcase stuff that was a *long* way off, and Interplay was one of them. *Net Runner* is a Bladerunner-ish interactive movie featuring digitised actors performing in front of computer-generated backdrops. It looked quite intriguing, but don't get too excited though — it's unlikely to be released before Spring of next year.

● Regular readers may remember that last issue we gave you a sneak preview of a new Delphine game from EA called Project Morphs. Well, we just thought we'd take this opportunity to inform you that it's been retitled a somewhat snappier *Crossfire*. Other than there's nothing new to report — except, of course, that it still looks bleedin' *fantastic*.

● Access announced that *Under A Killing Moon 2* was already in production, although all it had to show of it were some stills of rendered game locations. There's no news on the plot or who will star in the game, as it's still a year or so from completion.

● Coming this Winter from Philips Media is *Alien Ally*, a 3D action game created by Argonaut Software. It looks beautiful, blending excellent Rebel Assault-style pre-rendered shoot-'em-up bits with Doom-style free-roaming 3D bits. More news soon...

● Having snatched Cyberia developers Xatrix from Interplay, Virgin are now looking forward to the release of their forthcoming sequel called — you guessed it — *Cyberia 2*. Hopefully hitting the shelves around Christmas, Cyberia 2 will keep in style with the original game, and will again be an interactive movie-type thang featuring gratuitous rendering and loads of gorgeous presentation. Thankfully the gameplay will be radically reworked, to make this super-sequel even more playable than its parent.

● *VR Sports* is the title given to Interplay's new range of sports simulations soon to debut on the Saturn and PlayStation followed by an imminent PC release. Currently working on VR Baseball '95, the 25-strong development team will also be releasing VR Basketball and VR Hockey. Featuring motion-captured players and Interplay's realistic 360 degree Virtual Fieldvision, VR Baseball will combine spectacular graphics with intuitive controls, as well including as the stats, players and even stadiums of real-life baseball teams! Expect to see VR Baseball around the end of the year.

● Blizzard Entertainment are back, and they've bought WarCraft along for the journey. Scheduled for an October release, *WarCraft II: Tides of Darkness* once again sees the orcs battling out with us humans, but now a whole host of new beasties, including Dragons, Elven archers and Griffins have been drafted in for the siege. Including beginner missions and advanced campaigns for veterans of the original game, WarCraft 2 will also feature extensive multi-player options, in which up to 7 players can compete via a network!

● *Pax Imperia 2* is Blizzard's long-awaited sequel to the original Pax Imperia. Mind you, we can't actually *remember* the original but — hey! — we'll give anything a try! Essentially it's a space strategy game in which players get to maintain, control and expand their own galactic empire, having complete freedom to construct spaceships and then send them across sprawling solar systems. Released this coming October, Pax Imperia 2 is another game to feature a multi-player network option, and is structured in such a way that the size of the game area and the intelligence of the enemy is completely user-definable, making this one for gamers of all persuasions.

● Electronic Arts continue their popular EA Sports range with *NHL '96*, an enhanced version of their high-playable hockey game. Featuring up-to-date team rosters based on last season's statistics, the game will feature all the bone-crunching body checks and slap-shot power-plays that made the original so good, as well as including CD-quality sound and an instant replay option packed with dynamic camera angles. Complete with modem support on CD, NHL '96 will be emerging from the sin bin in the Autumn.

Rebel Assault 2

LucasArts

First there was Rebel Assault, the biggest-selling CD game of all time. And now there is Rebel Assault 2 — and it's more than likely that this long-awaited sequel will do just as well when it's launched this Xmas. Unlike the first game, which basically followed the plot of Star Wars and culminated in the attack on the Death Star, Rebel 2 has an all-new storyline. Featuring brand new locations, characters and technology, Rebel 2 centres around the Dreighton Nebula, a sort of Bermuda Triangle in space where ships mysteriously go missing.

Many years ago, during the Clone Wars, two mighty fleets of starships were engaged in battle when they were swallowed up by the Nebula, never to be seen again. Now pilots joke that its the ghosts of those two warring factions who are responsible for the lost ships, but as the game progresses it becomes clear that the Empire is behind the disappearances, and a new threat to the Alliance is revealed...

Only two characters from Rebel 1 re-appear in the sequel, namely Rookie One (i.e. you, the player) and Ru Murleen. However, they — and the rest of the game's characters — are no longer hand-drawn graphics but blue-screened actors performing in front of computer-generated backdrops *a la* Wing Commander 3.

"This is the first time George Lucas has let anyone else film a live action Star Wars fantasy," says Rebel 2's project leaders, Vince Lee, "so it's really an honour to be making this game — and it really better be good!"

The gameplay is effectively the same as before — i.e. lots of action-packed flying and blasting as you travel along pre-rendered paths pulled off CD. However, the video playback system employed is a vast improvement over Rebel 1's, boasting greater speed and improved image clarity.

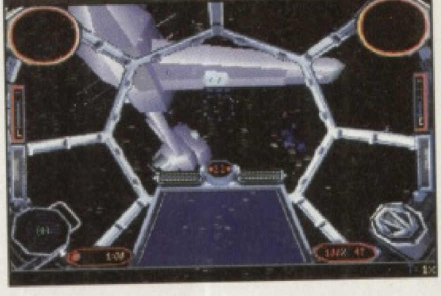
The range and scope of the game has been enhanced too. During the game the player gets to pilot various starfighters, including B-Wings, speeder bikes and even the Millennium Falcon, and go into battle against stormtroopers, TIE Fighters and Star Destroyers.

"We have so much more technology available to us than we did with the first game," concludes Lee. "Rebel 2 will really be like playing a Star Wars movie. That, combined with an original story and improved gameplay, should make Rebel 2 a worthy sequel."

Personally we can't wait for this one — Dave Kelsall has already sent a note to Santa asking for it in his stocking this Xmas.

● *Rebel Assault 2 will be released this Xmas.*

Coming this Autumn is *TIE Fighter Collector's CD* from LucasArts, containing the original TIE Fighter, the Defender Of The Empire campaign add-on and a brand new 22-mission campaign designed specially for the CD. The CD also features enhanced graphics during the intro and cutscenes.



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The Dig

LucasArts

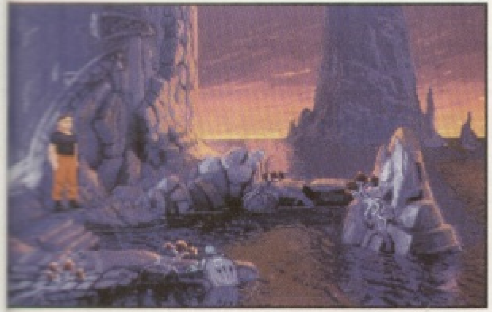
After literally *years* in development, LucasArts has finally revealed that its ambitious graphic adventure, The Dig, will be launched in the Autumn. The Dig's dramatic plot revolves around the trials of three astronauts sent to investigate an asteroid approaching the Earth. On reaching their destination, however, they are transported to a mysterious alien world plagued by strange, ghost-like apparitions.

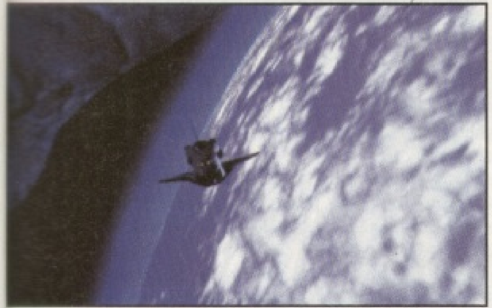
As you probably already know, The Dig is based on a story idea by famous movie director Steven Spielberg. However, what you may not know is that it boasts special effects created by Industrial Light & Magic (who created the effects for Star Wars, Indiana Jones, ET, Terminator 2 and Jurassic Park, amongst many others) and dialogue written by the award-winning science fiction author, Orson Scott Card.

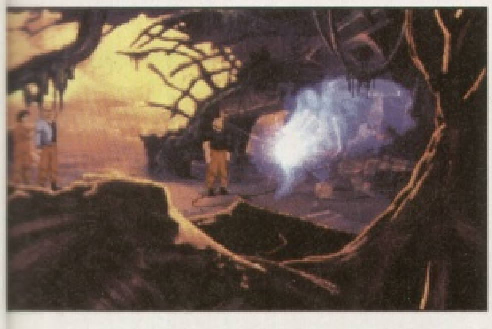
The Dig sounds very impressive on paper, but I couldn't help but feel a little disappointed by it when I saw it at the show. Admittedly I only played it for a few minutes so it's somewhat unfair to make quality judgements, but in the same time at last year's ECTS Full Throttle managed to knock my socks off and put them back on again!

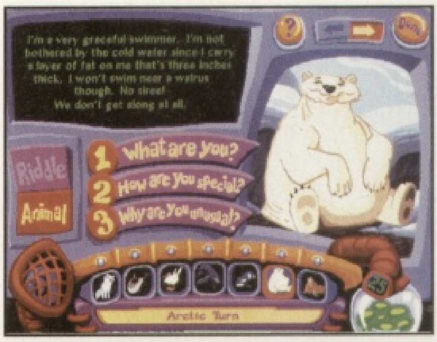
However, there's still some months to go yet before The Dig is finally released, and given the game's pedigree — I mean, we're talking about a dream wish collaboration between LucasArts, Spielberg and ILM, for gawd's sake — it's more than likely that my initial impressions will prove to be very wrong. Let's hope so, eh?

● *The Dig will be released this Autumn.*

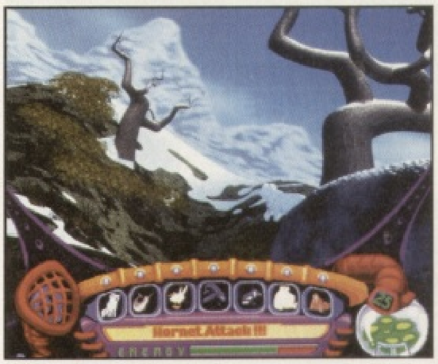


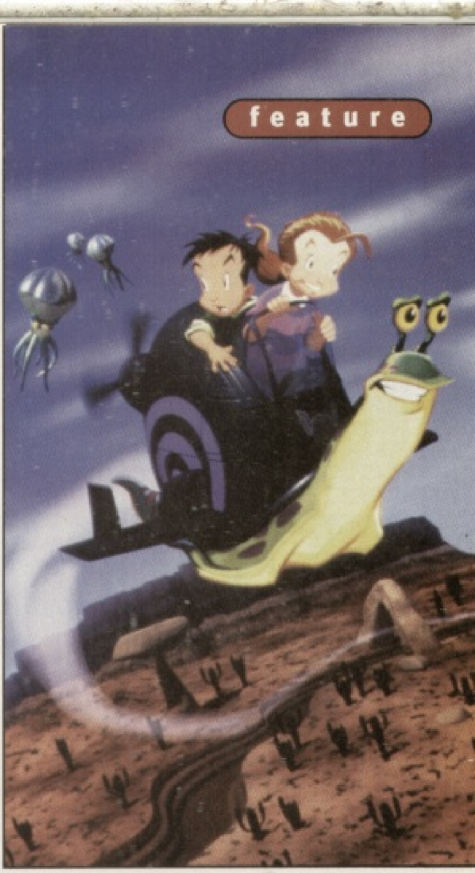






I'm a very graceful swimmer... I'm not bothered by the cold water since I carry a layer of fat on me that's three inches thick. I won't swim near a walrus though. No siree! We don't get along at all.





Mortimer And The Riddles Of The Medallion

LucasArts

A lot of misguided fools think that computer games are are puerile entertainment intended just for kids, but in the case of LucasArts' Mortimer And The Riddles Of The Medallion (or MATROFM, for short) they'd be absolutely correct. MATROFM is a highly-colourful interactive adventure aimed squarely at inquisitive youngsters aged between 4 and 9 years old — so it's going to be the *perfect* game to help Dave Kelsall while away the long, lonely evenings.

MATROFM is a sort of modern fairytale. Apparently, the evil ne'r-do-well Lodius has stolen a special magical medallion from his former mentor, the kindly Professor Lazlow. However, because its magical powers were meant only to be used for good deeds, the medallion explodes into a million pieces — but not before Lazlow manages to use it to turn all the animals into statues.

Now Sid and Sally, aided by the giant flying snail Mortimer, must travel the world, releasing the animals from their stone prisons and retrieving all the lost shards of the medallion. (This sounds like the plot for one of those cartoon strips that Viz do from time to time, doesn't it?)

MATROFM may seem like something of a departure from LucasArts' usual games, but as Jack Sorensen, LucasArts' President, explains: "Over the years LucasArts has developed critically acclaimed educational multimedia programs for schools with partners like the National Geographic Society and the National Audubon Society. Additionally, George Lucas is very committed to enhancing the lives of children through technology. Based on this heritage, it's natural that LucasArts enter the early entertainment market."

● *MATROFM will be released in early 1996.*

Calia 2095

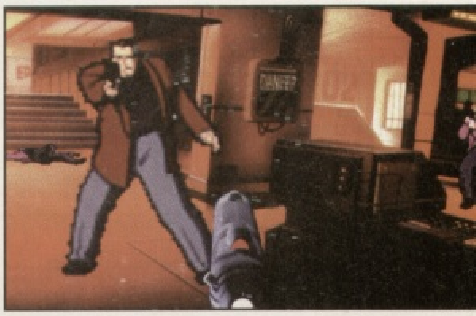
LucasArts

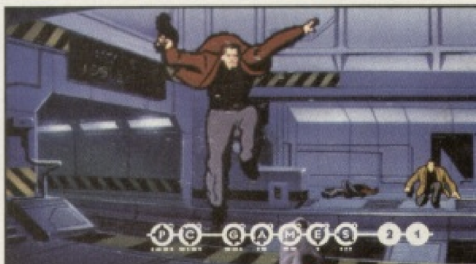
Does the world really need another Doom clone? Well, if it looks like Calia 2095 I'd say the answer is "Yes, most definitely"! Partly designed by Ed Kilham, the man behind X-Wing and TIE Fighter, Calia 2095 is an action thriller blending first-person 3D action with more traditional adventure elements, such as info gathering and puzzle solving.

But what exactly is Calia? Well, it stands for California Independent Area, an massive island super-state lying just off the west coast of America which was formed by the Great Quake of 2045. It's a place rife with criminal activity, so much so that even the police can't cope, which is why they need someone like you — a professional bounty detective.

As LucasArts didn't have Calia 2095 on demonstration at E^3 it's hard to give you any more information than this, but the storyline sounds promising and the screenshots are certainly very appetite-whetting. More news as and when we have it.

● *Calia 2095 will be released this Winter.*





E³ in brief

- It's hardly surprising there's little to show of Blizzard Entertainment's *Shattered Nations*, because it won't actually surface until Winter '96! Expect to see detailed SVGA graphics though, along with the same compulsively gripping gameplay that made WarCraft so addictive.

- The PGA Tour golf games have long-since been regarded as by far the most playable on virtually any computer, but now Electronic Arts are about to make the best even better with the autumn release of *PGA Tour Golf '96!* Incorporating an enhanced game interface, PGA '96 has dispensed with the old style graphics in favour of photorealistic golfers and video footage from the PGA Tour itself. Stuffed with game options, digitised sound effects and even seasoned PGA pros like Tom Kite and Fuzzy Zoeller, this looks set to revolutionise pixellated putting greens forever.

- This autumn Accolade are returning to deep space for the third Star Control adventure, aptly titled, er, *Star Control III*. The sequel boasts a number of improvements over its forebears, namely the flat 2D starmap has now been replaced by a glorious 3D battlefield! This obviously makes combat a lot more complex, so the alien enemies' artificial intelligence has been cranked up to compensate. Packed with much-improved presentation and the same absorbing gameplay, Star Control III is going to be out of this world.

- Leaving behind their strategy games for a moment, Blizzard enter the RPG scene with the dark-'n'-eerie *Diablo*. Combining state-of-the-art SVGA graphics with intense role-playing gameplay, the player descends into a massive crypt looking for vengeance. Will you defeat the unseen enemy? Find out when Diablo in unleashed in the Spring of next year.

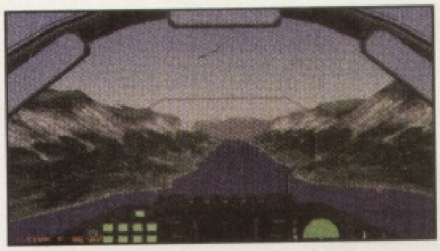
- Scheduled for release from QQP this August is *Awful Green Things From Outer Space* , a "fun-filled" (it says here) PC-CD incarnation of the "popular" (it also says here) boardgame. Basically it's a wacky 'defeat the aliens' quest, in which the player uses anything from a fire extinguisher to a canister of Zgwortz to repel the other-worldly invaders.

- The massive success of the gothic horror movie Interview With The Vampire will no doubt come as some encouragement to GT Interactive, who later this year plan to release *Vampire: The Masquerade* , a horror adventure in much the same vein (no pun intended). Apart from that — and the fact that it's based on a best-selling book by publishers White Wolf — there's precious little more to say about Vampire: The Masquerade. We're sticking our necks out here, but we should have some more news next issue.

- Interplay's big licensed game is the PC interpretation of the forthcoming Summer movie *Waterworld*. Set in a barbaric future where the melting polar ice-caps have flooded the planet, the film stars Kevin Costner as a gill-necked hero searching for fabled dry land and is rumoured to be the most expensive movie ever created.

  On the Interplay stand there was little to see of the game itself apart from a very nice texture-mapped 3D engine which allowed you to scoot around the desolate remains of an underwater city. No doubt we'll have more news — and some screenshots — nearer Waterworld's Xmas release date.

- Blimey — programmers, eh? Give 'em an inch and they'll take a mile. Alexey Pajitnov used to be quite happy writing little arcade puzzle games. But now he's got a few zillion quid in his pocket thanks to the phenomenal success of Tetris, he's decided to create a vast 3D action/adventure game called *Ice & Fire*. There's very little to see of it at the moment, but hopefully we'll have more on it nearer the time of its release this Autumn by GT Interactive.



TFX: EF2000

DID/Ocean

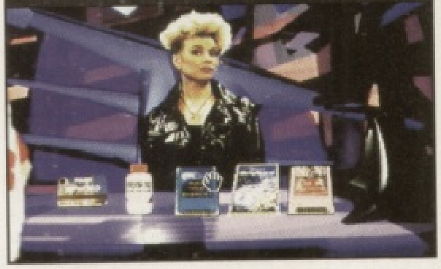
Digital Image Design dominated the skies with the brilliant TFX and look set to do exactly the same when the follow-up, TFX: EF2000, is released in October. Incorporating an overhauled 3D engine and superior presentation, EF2000 places armchair pilots in the cockpit of an advanced EuroFighter, and allows them to engage the enemy across a massive game area stretching over four million square kilometres!

Piloting your own aircraft as well as commanding up to four wingmen, the game caters for both one-off dogfights and full-blown campaigns set across a target-rich environment accurately reproduced from military maps and charts. The landscape is made even more realistic by the inclusion of staggeringly impressive polygon-mapped terrain, similar to the ground techniques featured in Flight Unlimited!

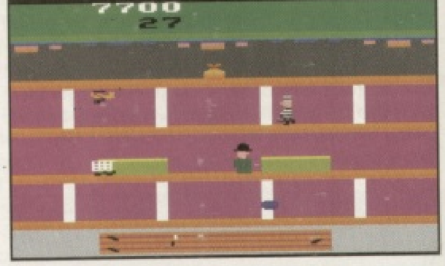
Threatening to be the most realistic flight sim on the PC to date thanks to a highly-accurate flight model based on de-classified info from British Aerospace, EF2000 becomes totally engrossing when played with a VR headset and flying across a network with eight other pilots! If DID get any closer to reality they'll have to package sick bags with the game!

- *TFX: EF2000 is due for release this October.*

Philips' *Burn: Cycle* first appeared to huge acclaim on the CD-i console, and now it's coming to PC-CD this Autumn. It's a Cyberpunk-themed action/adventure game with a plot that echoes that of Johnny Mnemonic, in so much as the player has two hours to get rid of a deadly virus that's been downloaded into his brain.



Atari confuse the world by announcing the release of the *Atari 2600 Action Pack II*, which is scheduled to hit the software shelves this Summer. Packed with yet another fifteen Atari VCS 'classics', this bundle contains Barnstorming, Megamania and Keystone Kapers, to name but a few. Whether this second pack has more nostalgic value than the first remains to be seen, but let me just say that we're not holding our breath.



Warhammer & Warhammer 40,000

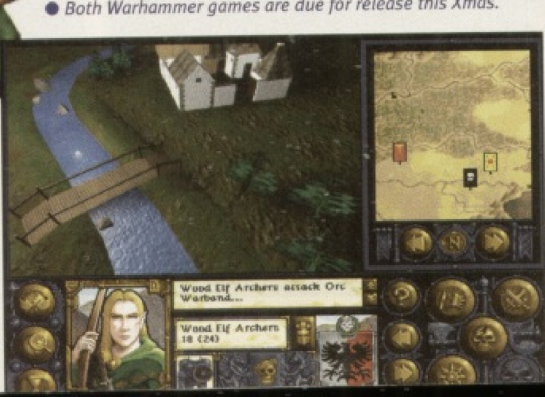
Mindscape

Considering the popularity of Games Workshop's table-top games, it was inevitable that a Warhammer computer game would appear at some point — but I didn't expect six of 'em to turn up at once! Yes, it's true — in collaboration with Games Workshop, Mindscape are planning to release a complete series of Warhammer games, the first two of which will be based on Fantasy Battles and its space-age brother, Warhammer 40,000: Dark Crusaders.

Appearing around Christmas, Warhammer Fantasy Battles is essentially a strategy game in which the player takes on the part of a human mercenary in command of a handful of foot troops. The overall aim to gradually build up your army by undertaking missions to generate funds, battling against rival mercenaries and even the evil Chaos army that's spreading slowly across the realm. Featuring slick 3D-rendered graphics throughout and highly-advanced AI, Fantasy Battles promises to be every strategy buff's dream.

Dark Crusaders is a totally different game entirely, and is in fact a Doom-style blaster based in a future millennia. Controlling a squad of Dark Angel marines, you've been summoned by the Emperor to investigate a disturbance on the Imperial planet, Satis Prime. God knows what awaits your arrival, but you can bet the devious orks (space-age orcs) have a hand in the matter. Whatever, this is most definitely a game in which you shoot first and ask questions later!

- *Both Warhammer games are due for release this Xmas.*



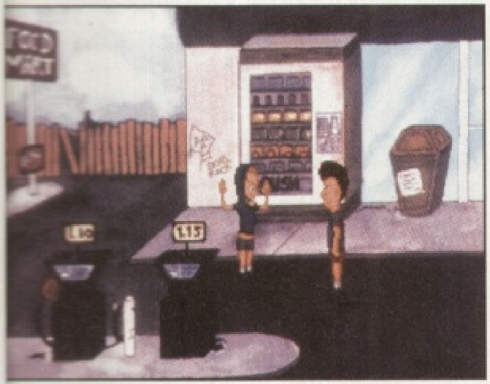
Beavis & Butthead

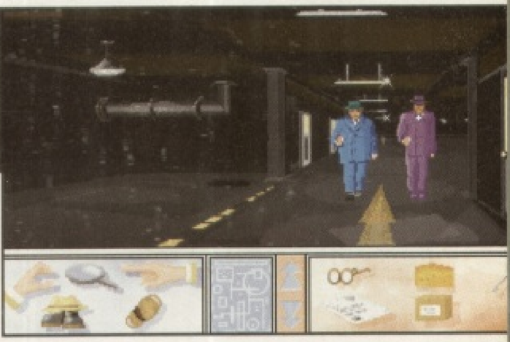
Viacom

MTV's undynamic duo are raiding the PC and they're bringing their puerile humour with 'em! In Viacom's point-'n'-click adventure, players control either Beavis or Butthead as they try and impress gang-leader Todd in an effort to gain acceptance into his group of yobbish juveniles.

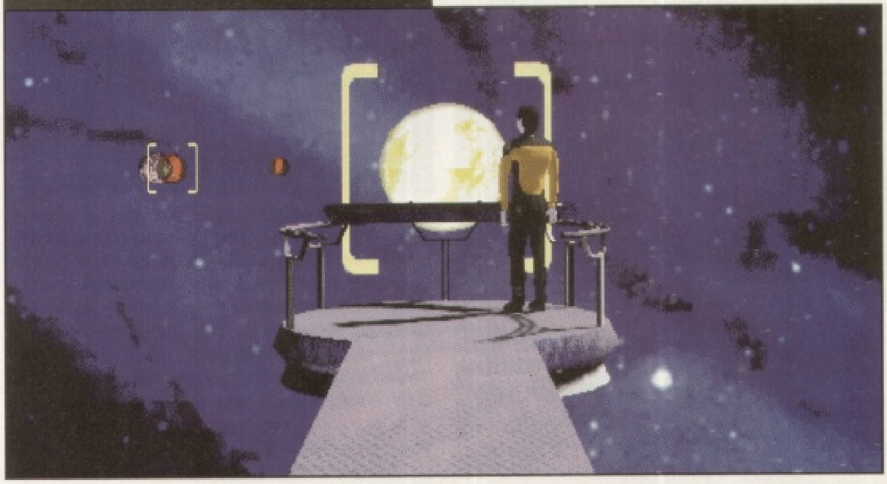
Packed with locations and a total of seven skill-testing sub-games, the all-new script has been crafted by the writers of the MTV show, and includes cameo appearances from around 50 characters from the television programme, including Principle McVicker, Mr Buzzcut and Earl! The voices of both Beavis and Butthead have been supplied by the vocal talents of Mike Judge too, the guy originally responsible from bringing the tiresome twosome to life.

● *Beavis & Butthead is due for release this Xmas.*

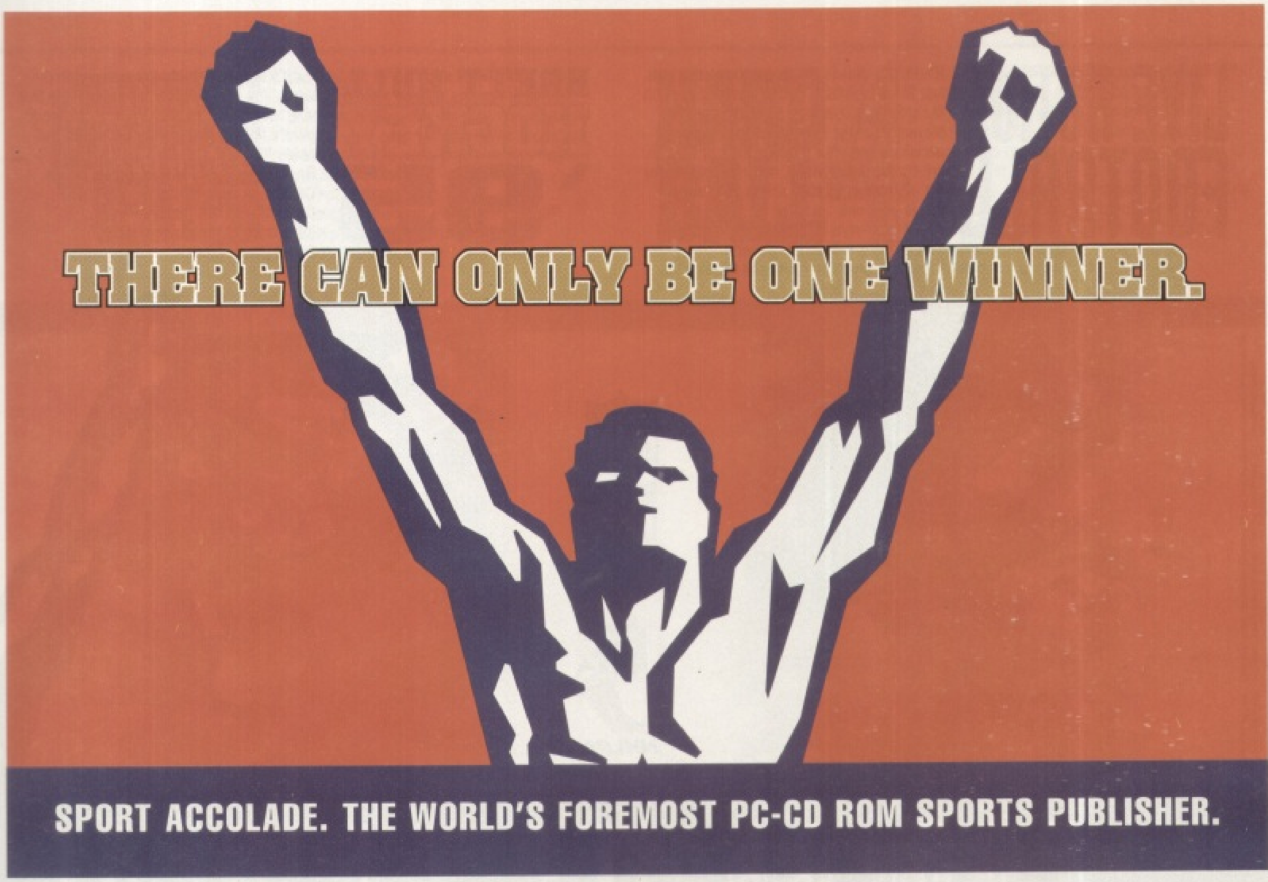




The award for arguably the longest ever title for a computer game goes to GameTek's *The Compelling Adventures Of A.Gent*. It's a challenging adventure cum action game is which you play an zany alcoholic detective hoping to strike it lucky on his next case, A.Gent will have a distinctly comic-book style and should surface around the end of the year.



The crews of 'old' Trek and 'new' Trek collide in *Star Trek: Generations*, Spectrum Holobyte's forthcoming game based upon the hit movie. Players can choose to assume the role of either Picard or Kirk in this Doom-like first-person 3D action game, although you'd never know it from this dull and totally unrepresentative screenshot they gave us.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Wing Commander IV

Origin

After all the rumour and speculation printed as fact by certain *other* PC magazines, PC GAMES is proud to be the first to announce that, yes, it's official — Origin is indeed in the process of creating Wing Commander IV.

Now that the Kilrathi have been defeated, the plot centres around internal power struggles within the Confederation. Blair, the hero from Wing III, is posted to the Border Worlds where civil war has broken out. However, while on duty there, Blair uncovers a plot by the nefarious Admiral Tolwyn to seize control of the Confederation by means of a secret mind-controlling super weapon...

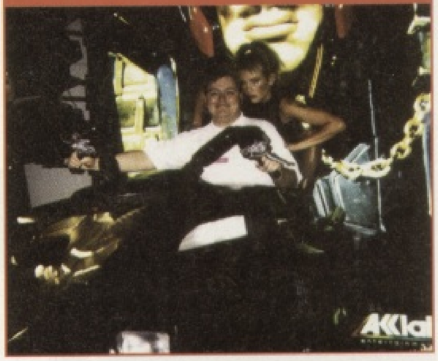
Although hard news about Wing IV is scarce at the moment — filming of the FMV bits hadn't even started when the announcement was made at E3 — Origin confirmed that the game's basic structure will be the same as before, i.e. lots of space dogfights interspersed with 'movie-like' interactive cutscenes.

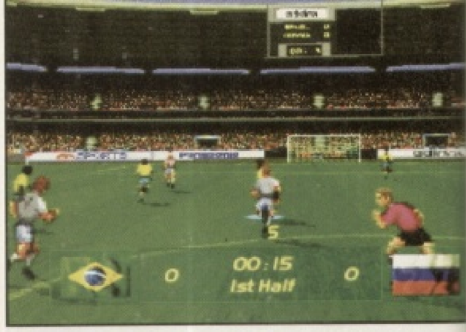
Indeed, part of the reason for Wing IV's very un-Origin-like release date — this coming Xmas — is that the basic game engine from Wing III will be recycled with only a few tweaks here and there. The main innovation is that Origin is dispensing with computer-generated sets — instead, full-size sets are being specially built in Hollywood, thus permitting extra directorial flourishes like pans and zooms.

Actors Mark Hamill, Tom Wilson and Malcolm McDowell will return to reprise their roles of Blair, Maniac and Tolwyn respectively, and Chris Roberts, the original creator of the whole Wing series, is back in the director's chair.

● *Wing IV will be released this Xmas (like, yeah — we' ll believe it when we see it).*

Acclaim had one of the most impressive stands at the show, which was dominated by a huge video wall showing trailers of Batman Forever and Judge Dredd, two of Acclaim's movie licences. Also on the stand was the actual Batmobile itself and a Lawmaster bike from the Dredd movie — and look, here's a piccy of some fat saddo sitting on it, accompanied by a raunchy-looking bimbo. If 'is wife ever sees this, she'll kill 'im...





FIFA Soccer '96

Electronic Arts

As good as the PC version of EA's FIFA Soccer was, it was still hard not to feel a little short-changed. While we were enjoying the soccer sim's delights in attractive but relatively primitive isometric-3D, owners of the slick 3DO version were being treated to gorgeous texture-mapped 3D players and stadia, multiple rotatable camera views and a host of high-tech bells and whistles.

But don't worry, PC fans — we'll get our own back this Autumn with the release of FIFA Soccer '96. As well as delivering an enhanced version of the 3D graphics system used in the 3DO game, FIFA '96 also boasts improved player animations, sophisticated computer AI for the opposing teams, running commentary by John Motson — "the international voice of soccer" (it says here), 15 minutes of FMV footage and more besides.

Indeed, it promises to be a good Autumn for footy fans, as that's the time when Gremlin will also be unveiling Actua Soccer, its own 3D soccer game. As to which one will be the best... well, only time — and the definitive PC GAMES review — will tell.

● *FIFA Soccer '96 will be released this Autumn.*

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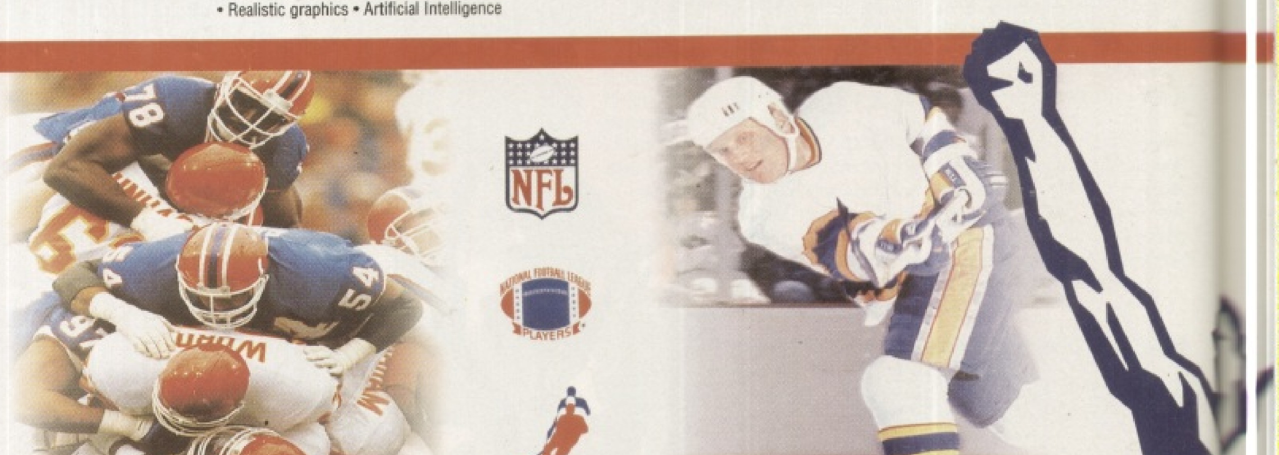

WARNER INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

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The 10th Planet

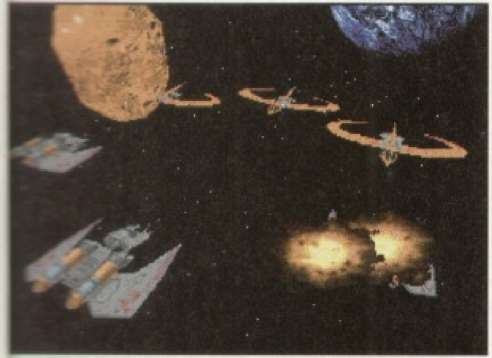
Bethesda

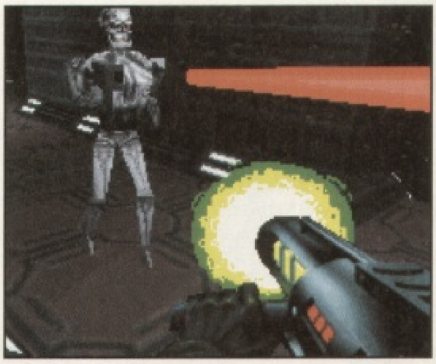
If developers weren't attempting to create a Doom beater, they were trying to top TIE Fighter — or, as in Bethesda's case, they were trying to do both. As well as Terminator: Future Shock, the company were demonstrating The 10th Planet.

Produced in collaboration with Centropolis Entertainment, who have previously been responsible for 'hit' movies such as Moon 44 (obviously 'hit' has a silent 's' in this case), Universal Soldier and Stargate, The 10th Planet focuses on cosmic battles against hideous, bug-like aliens.

Bethesda's 3D engine is very impressive, allowing you to fly right up close to even the biggest starships without any pixellation or degradation in the texture-mapped detail. But don't get too worked up yet — it's not due until next year.

● *The 10th Planet will be released in early 1996.*





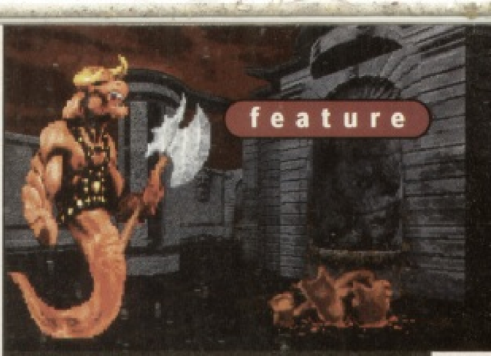
The Terminator: Future Shock

Bethesda

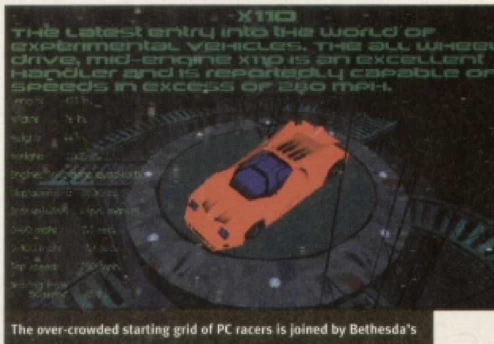
There were more Doom clones at E3 than you could wave a ArchVile at, but one of the best was Bethesda's Terminator: Future Shock. In every respect it's a vast improvement on the tragic Terminator: Rampage, which Bethesda released last year.

For a start you don't just wander around on foot. If you find a Hunter-Killer you can climb into the cockpit and fly around. If you come across a jeep you can get behind the wheel and go for a drive. The amount of freedom you have is amazing. And it's not just a case of 'shoot everything and stay alive' either — there's a strong plot running through the game and your actions determine how it develops.

● *The Terminator: Future Shock will be released this Autumn.*



Yet another first-person action game is Capstone's *Witchaven*, a mediaeval romp much akin to Raven Software's Heretic. Featuring all the usual solo and multi-player options as well as puzzles to complement the hack-'n'-slay action, Witchaven should hit the shelves this Winter.



X110
THE LATEST ENTRY INTO THE WORLD OF EXPERIMENTAL VEHICLES. THE ALL WHEE
DRIVE, MID-ENGINE X110 IS AN EXCELLENT HANDLER AND IS REPORTEDLY CAPABLE OF
SPEEDS IN EXCESS OF 240 MPH.

The over-crowded starting grid of PC racers is joined by Bethesda's *X-Car*, a smart-looking circuit racing game that looks quite literally stunning thanks to its SVGA graphics. Choose to driver one of fifteen futuristic sports cars around a total of 18 rendered tracks, racing against either the computer or human opponents via a network. X-Car will be leaving the pits during the Winter.

with the
shots that
the world.
rett Hull

on ice

UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS '95

You'll take it to the crunch time with over 1400 NFL stars busting across the screen. Strategy, trading, play-by-play, and action so intense, your head will spin. When you play football with the pros, it gets pretty rough.
- Actual NFL teams
- 3-D modelled players
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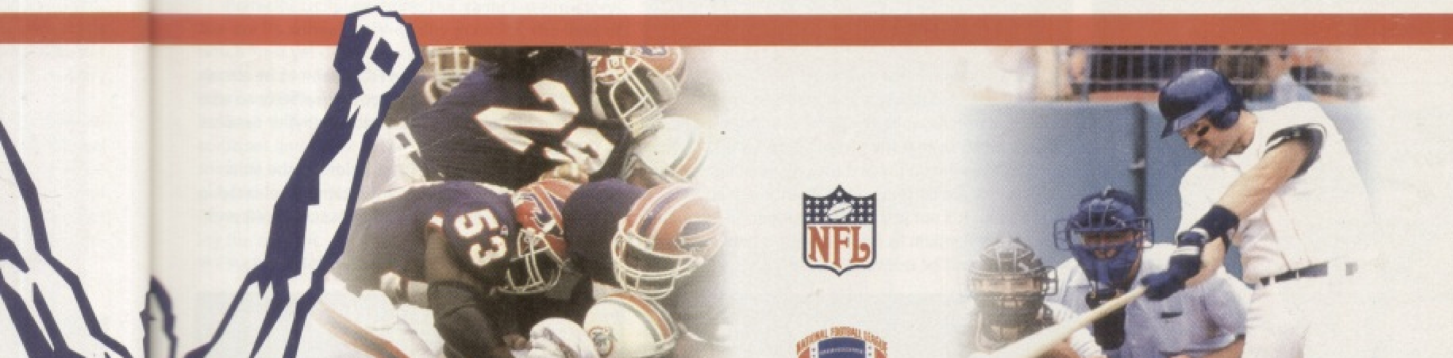
- Super VGA graphics • 1 or 2 players

HARD BALL 4™

The only perfect game. Baseball. HardBall 4™ is stacked with 28 realistic ballparks with varying field conditions, complete stats and thrilling play-by-play commentary. From the dugouts to the fence, it's as close to perfect as you can get.
- Brush up on your skills in batting and pitching
- Fine-tune your player attributes
- Select your choice of viewing perspective
- Instant replay mode
- Superb player graphics



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L AS YOU CAN HANDLE.

SPORT ACCOLADE

E^3 in brief

- One of Interplay's big E^3 announcements was that it has secured the rights to produce official *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* computer games based on the TSR, Inc.'s Forgotten Realms and Planetscape AD&D series. In fact, so important is the deal to Interplay that it has set up a special internal division which will concentrate on producing AD&D games and nothing else.

  "TSR's fantasy games have captured the imagination of players around the world," said Brian Fargo, Interplay's President. "We decided we must set this up internally as its own division in order to produce the best games possible that fans of AD&D will enjoy."

  As well as traditional RPG/adventure games, Interplay plan AD&D-based strategy, simulation and action games, although it's unlikely that anything will be seen of them before the Autumn.

- Fans of Papyrus Software's *NASCAR Racing* will be delighted to learn that there's a track pack in the pipeline. The add-on, containing seven new stockcar courses, should be available any day now.

- Hang on to your steering wheels! Coming this Xmas is *IndyCar Racing 2*, the sequel to the smash hit racer from Papyrus Software. Although there was nothing to see of it at E^3, Papyrus is promising crisp SVGA graphics, realistic collisions, a special 'arcade' driving mode and multi-player link-up options. More news soon...

- This July LucasArts will launch *The LucasArts Archives Vol. 1*, a CD compilation containing Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis, Day Of The Tentacle, Sam & Max Hit The Road, Rebel Assault and Star Wars Screen Entertainment, as well as playable demos of Dark Forces, Full Throttle and The Dig.

- *Formula One Grand Prix 2* is, of course, the sequel to MicroProse's classic racing sim. Once again written by Geoff Crammond, the game boasts superb SVGA graphics and bags of realism. It was on show at E^3 (and looking fantastic, we might add) but sadly we couldn't bring you any screenshots of it because MicroProse are currently negotiating for official Formula One licence. Hopefully we'll have some for you next month.

- Although they claim to have been around for three years, developers Scavenger are a new name to me — although given the quality of the two games they had on show, I really *should* know them.

  The first game, *4X Frenzy*, isn't about the drunken antics of a gang of Australians after closing time as the title implies. Instead it's a Mad Max-ish car combat game in which the player has to battle off looters and thieves as he tries to ferry cargo across America in his 4x4 truck. The second game is called *Into The Shadows*, and is an RPG played from an Alone In The Dark-style viewing angle.

  Both games feature stunning texture-mapped and light-sourced graphics and should be available by the end of the year. With any luck we'll have some screenshots next issue, when you can see for yourself how good the games look.

- *Virtual Karts* is a new racing game from MicroProse, which can best be described as a simulation enthusiast's take on SuperKarts. Sporting SVGA graphics and multiple in-cockpit and out-of-cockpit views, it looks excellent. Look out for piccies next issue.

- Wot no *Quake*? Sadly, no — id Software declined to display its forthcoming Doom follow-up, which cast doubt in many people's minds over whether it would make its predicted Xmas release date.

- *Bladerunner* is probably one of the most influential sci-fi movies ever made, and fans will be pleased to hear (hopefully) that it's going to be turned into a PC game courtesy of Westwood Studios and Virgin Interactive. Work hasn't started on it yet — but then, it's not due to be released until Autumn 1996.

- Games For Her is a new division set up by American Laser Games dedicated to producing games that (and I quote) "girls will love". Although it's a nice idea, it goes amusingly awry as soon as the games' on-line help cuts in — if you make a mistake, you're put correct by a man's voice! Nice one, GFH...

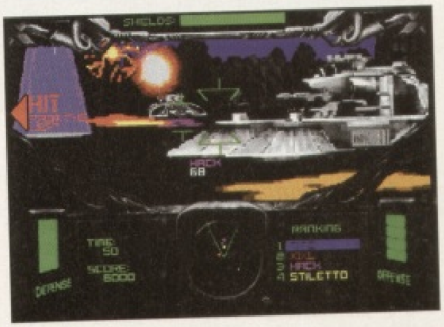
T-Mek

Time Warner Interactive

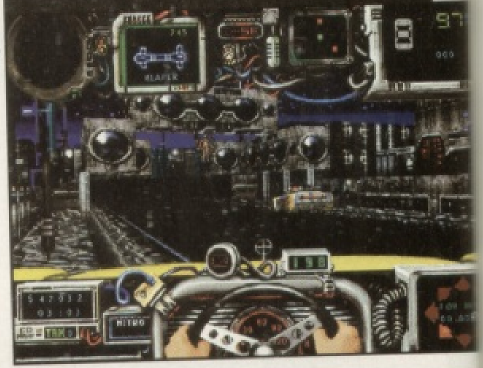
Based on the popular arcade coin-op, T-Mek is an intense combat simulator in which futuristic tanks and deadly alien drones battle it out in vast hi-tech arenas. Primarily a multi-player game in which warriors fight for the T-Mek title, competitors will have to face each arena's reigning champion before tackling the ultimate challenge, Nazrac the Eliminator!

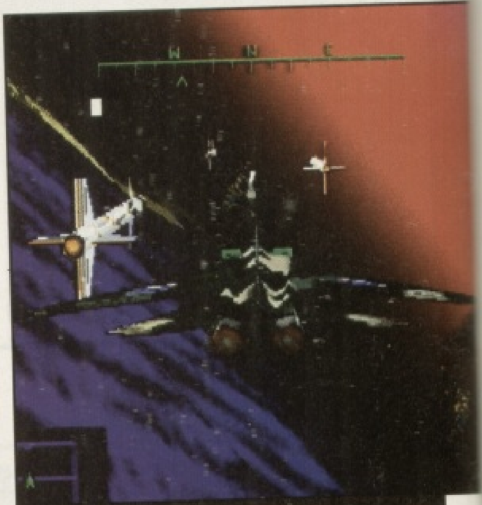
Players choose from a selection of six tanks, each of which is rated for speed, armour thickness and overall effectiveness. Additionally the tanks have their own specific weapon line-up, some equipped with fire-and-forget homing missiles and others packed out with deadly Super Rockets. Unfortunately it's not due to appear until October, so you've got plenty of time to nip down the arcades and get in some practice!

● *T-Mek is due for release this October.*



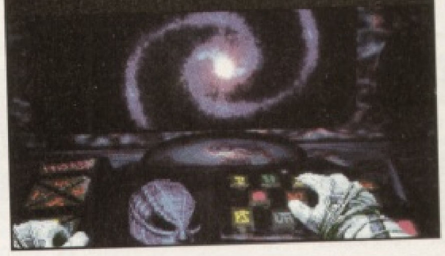
Road Warrior is the sequel to GameTek's nifty taxi-'em-up, Quarantine. Boasting a number of new features including SVGA graphics and modem play, cabby extraordinaire Drake Edgewater has escaped from the prison city and is now looking for blood in the big wide world. Look out for him around Christmas.





Although it may sound like a beat-'em-up, *Agile Warrior: F-111X* is in fact a frantic blaster in which pilots are seated inside a hi-tech aircraft with super-destructive firepower at their finger-tips. Boasting super-slick graphics and bundles of levels, Agile Warrior will be released from Virgin at the beginning of next year.

Millennia is the name given Take 2's forthcoming space exploration game which is jammed with lavish rendered graphics and video footage, as well as an enormous starfield to explore and colonise. Pencilled in for an August release, can you overpower the Microids and rule the galaxy?



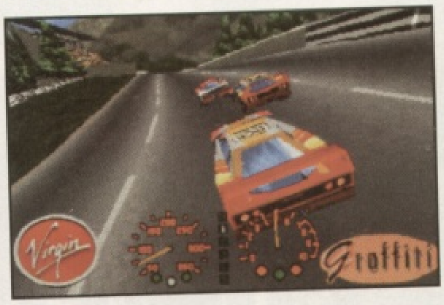
Screamer

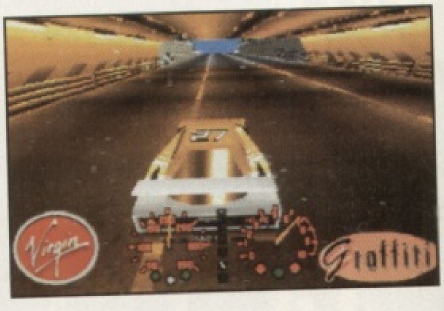
Virgin

Just as Doom-clones swamped the market when id's classic first appeared, so the PC is soon to be awash with Ridge Racer clones, one of the most impressive being Virgin's Screamer. Programmed by Graffiti (who also developed Iron Assault), the game combines the realistic circuit graphics of Ridge Racer with the hyper-detailed cars (so much so that the gleaming bodywork even reflects the light!) of Daytona.

It's moves incredibly fast too, easily matching the speed of Ridge Racer on the PlayStation. At the moment the graphics are currently in VGA, although an SVGA mode is likely to be added before the game is released in the Autumn. It's not just a graphical tour de force either, as it's said to be immensely playable too! You'll probably need a Pentium to run it though, so start saving now!

● *Screamer will be released this Autumn.*





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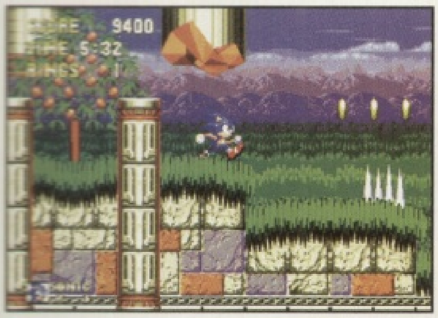
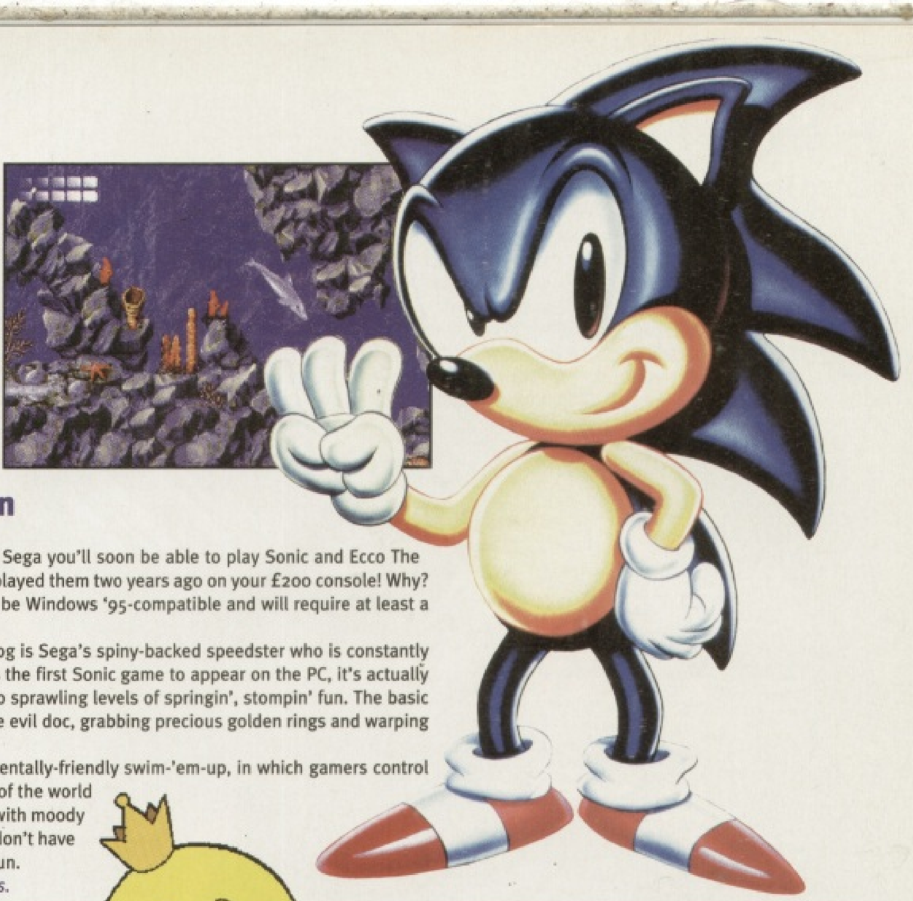




Sonic & Ecco The Dolphin

Sega

Blimey — stop the press! Thanks to software giants Sega you'll soon be able to play Sonic and Ecco The Dolphin on your £1500 Pentium... when you could have played them two years ago on your £200 console! Why? Who knows? But what is certain is that both games will be Windows '95-compatible and will require at least a 75MHz Pentium to run!

For the console virgins among us, Sonic the Hedgehog is Sega's spiny-backed speedster who is constantly thwarting the plans of Doctor Robotnik. Although this is the first Sonic game to appear on the PC, it's actually the third in the Megadrive series, and is jammed with 60 sprawling levels of springin', stompin' fun. The basic aim is to free your fluffy buddies from the clutches of the evil doc, grabbing precious golden rings and warping through time as you go.

Ecco the Dolphin, on the other hand, is an environmentally-friendly swim-'em-up, in which gamers control the purposeful porpoise as he explores the vast oceans of the world in search of his long-lost family. Mixing subtle graphics with moody ambient music, Ecco the Dolphin just goes to prove you don't have to beat the crap out of someone to have fin, er, I mean fun.

● *Sonic and Ecco The Dolphin will be released this Xmas.*

Psychic Detective

Electronic Arts

Having teamed up with animation giant Colossal Pictures, Electronic Arts are pushing back the boundaries of technology with its forthcoming interactive comedy thriller, Psychic Detective. Billed as an interactive movie, Psychic Detective was shot almost entirely around the San Francisco Bay and is packed with some five hours of live-action footage.

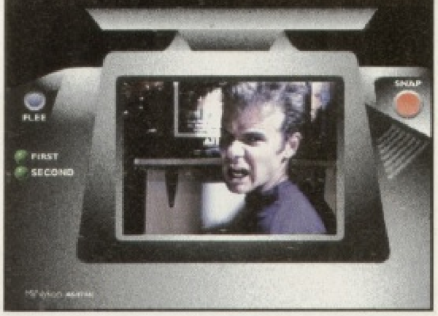
The player steps into the shoes of psychic extraordinaire Eric Fox who, rather than wasting his psychic powers cheating in exams or seducing gullible women, is instead using them to discover the identity of a murderer. He does this by 'jumping' from one character's mind to another, probing their inner-most thoughts and memories for clues as to the motive and eventually the culprit responsible for the killing.

Perfectly complementing the game's weird storyline are its surreal, FMV-quality graphics, the likes of which have yet to be seen on the PC. Combining high-quality video footage with a user-friendly control interface, throughout the adventure you get to try out loads of different possible leads, each one revealing surprises and twists in the ever-confusing script.

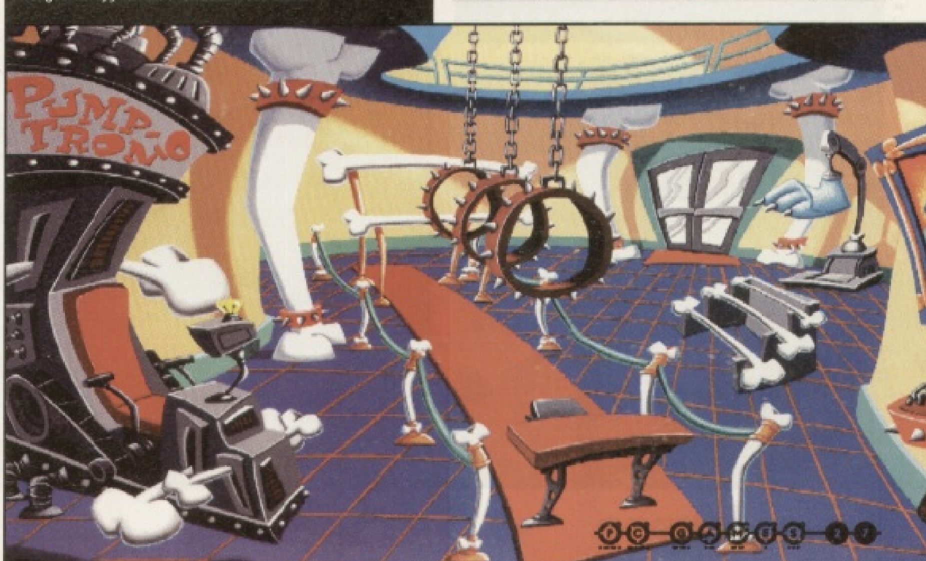
With its combination of incredible sound and graphics with a Hollywood-style screenplay, Psychic Detective looks set to impress when it's released during the autumn.

● *Psychic Detective will be released this Autumn.*

Hassle the stars of Tinseltown in Atari's July-released *Paparazzi!* As a freelance newspaper photographer, the only way to earn money in your profession is to take snaps of all the biggest names then selling off to interested publishers. Take clear defined pictures and you'll arouse the interest of the likes of National Geographic, otherwise you'll have to crawl back to the sleazy tabloids to get cash for your grotty Polaroids.



Virgin draft in the voice talents of Tim Curry and Dom DeLuise to accompany Christopher Lloyd when he gets dragged inside a cartoon in their CD-ROM adventure, *Toonstruck*. Using a combination of live-action footage and traditional character animation matted onto computer-generated backgrounds, Toonstruck could well be the funniest game of '95 when it's released in the winter.



Wetlands

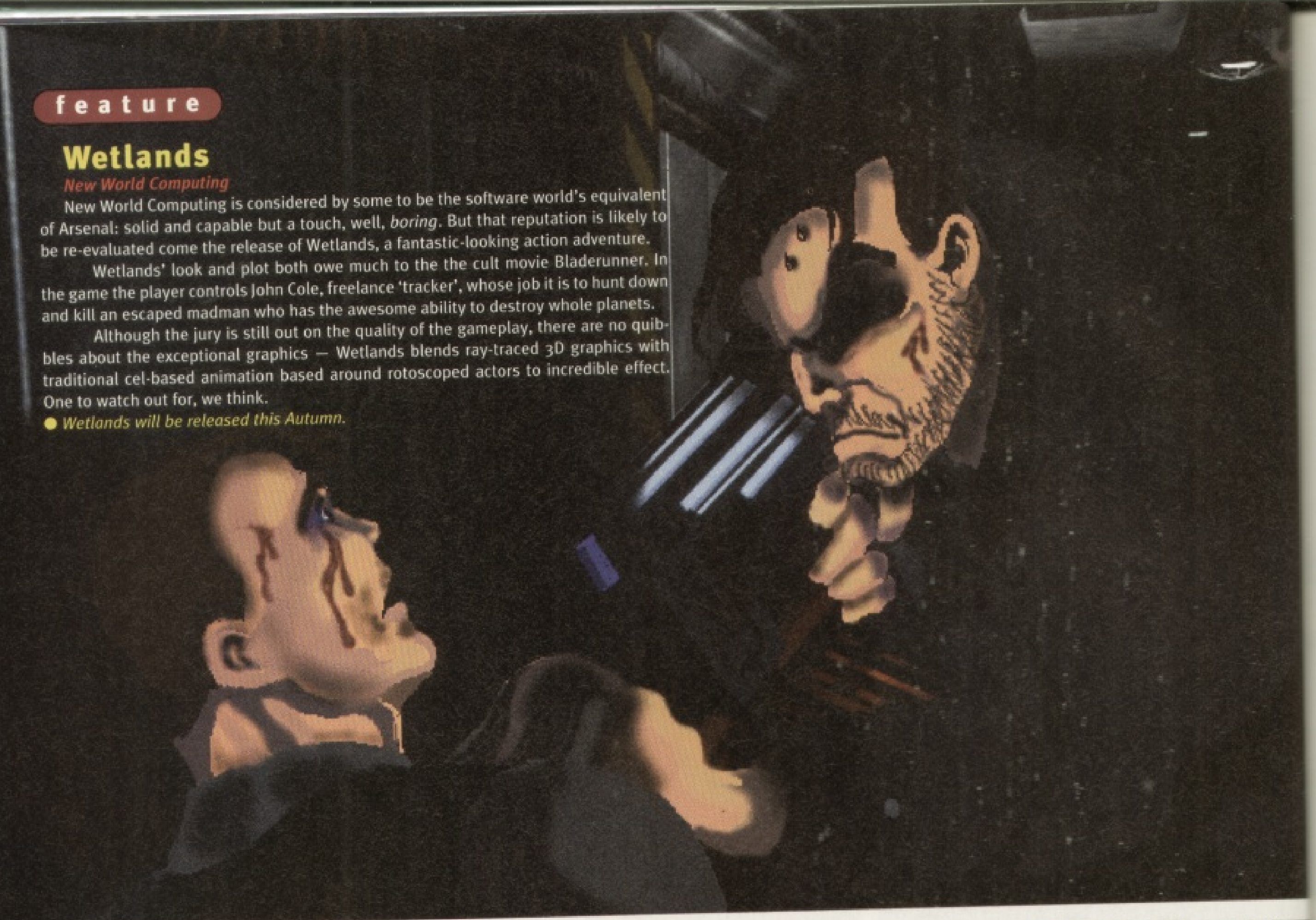
New World Computing

New World Computing is considered by some to be the software world's equivalent of Arsenal: solid and capable but a touch, well, *boring*. But that reputation is likely to be re-evaluated come the release of Wetlands, a fantastic-looking action adventure.

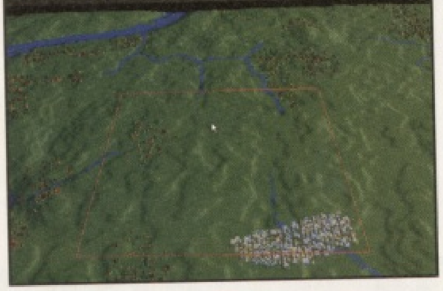
Wetlands' look and plot both owe much to the the cult movie Bladerunner. In the game the player controls John Cole, freelance 'tracker', whose job it is to hunt down and kill an escaped madman who has the awesome ability to destroy whole planets.

Although the jury is still out on the quality of the gameplay, there are no quibbles about the exceptional graphics — Wetlands blends ray-traced 3D graphics with traditional cel-based animation based around rotoscoped actors to incredible effect. One to watch out for, we think.

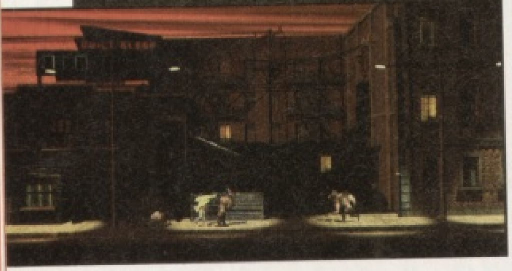
● *Wetlands will be released this Autumn.*



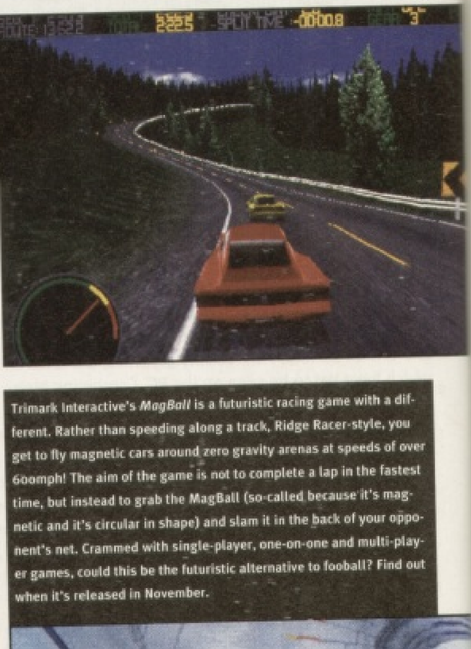
The War College is the sequel to the ancient wargame, Universal Military Simulator. Published by GameTek, The War College promises to be the only 3D solid-modelled real-time military simulator commercially available. Packed with 5 historic campaigns plus data disks planned for the future, The War College will roll out onto the battlefield around Xmas.

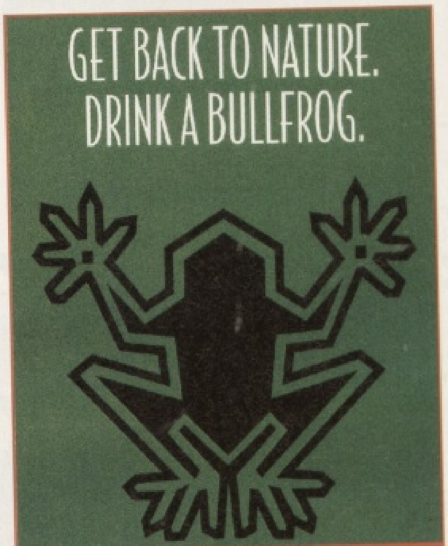


Parasite is an action adventure game from Psygnosis in which your body has been possessed by an alien cop! Who knows why, but if you don't obey his every command and hunt down some of the city's nastier criminals then it's goodnight sweet prince. Bursting with atmospheric levels and suitably gruesome enemies, Parasite won't rear its ugly head until early next year.



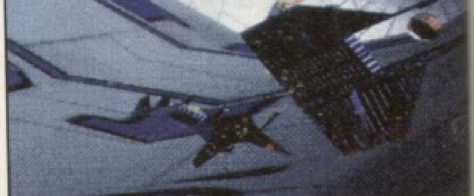
The world and his wife seemed to be unveiling new racing games, and EA was no exception. *The Need For Speed* is an upgraded conversion of the recent 3DO racer, offering six tracks, eight cars, six in-game 'camera' views and a healthy dose of realism. The 3DO original was a bit of a soaraway stunner, so this much-enhanced PC version, due around Autumn, should be amazing.

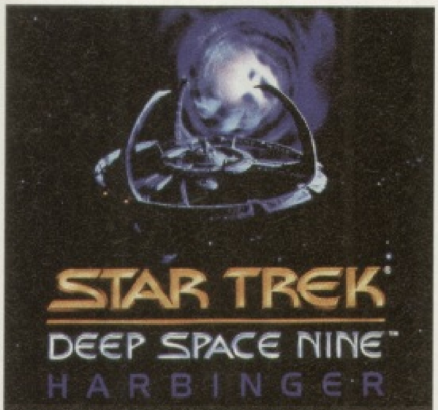



GET BACK TO NATURE.
DRINK A BULLFROG.

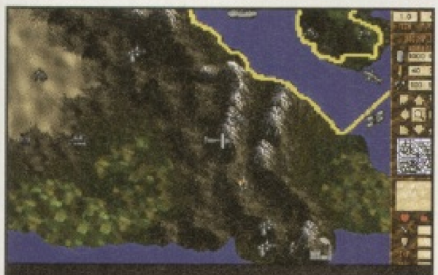
Trawling around computer shows is hard work, and what better way to unwind after a hard day's aisle-cruising than with a long, cool Bullfrog cocktail? EA went crazy promoting Bullfrog, even going so far as to give out chocolate bars in the shape of the Bullfrog logo! Incidentally, the cocktail — based around a green melon liquer — was absolutely *disgusting*...

Trimark Interactive's *MagBall* is a futuristic racing game with a different. Rather than speeding along a track, Ridge Racer-style, you get to fly magnetic cars around zero gravity arenas at speeds of over 600mph! The aim of the game is not to complete a lap in the fastest time, but instead to grab the MagBall (so-called because it's magnetic and it's circular in shape) and slam it in the back of your opponent's net. Crammed with single-player, one-on-one and multi-player games, could this be the futuristic alternative to fooball? Find out when it's released in November.





It seems that there's never been a better time to be a Star Trek fan. Spectrum Holobyte has just released Star Trek:TNG, and this Winter Viacom plans to launch the official *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* game. Subtitled Harbinger, it's a SVGA-based graphic adventure interspersed with rendered cutscenes. Whether any of the TV show's regular cast will be lending their vocal talents to the game has yet to be announced.



Over the next year or so the PC is going to be flooded by strategy games, one of which is GameTek's *Escalation*. Set on an imaginary planet called New Kelra, two opposing forces are battling it out for domination. Victory can only be won by developing the most advanced (and destructive) weapons and using it on the scum-bag enemy. Expect global warfare around the end of the year.

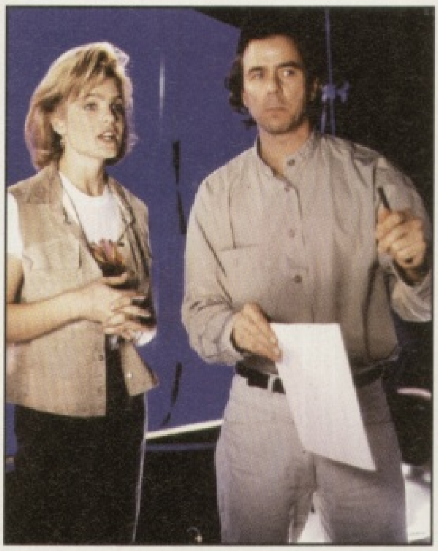
Panic In The Park

WarnerActive

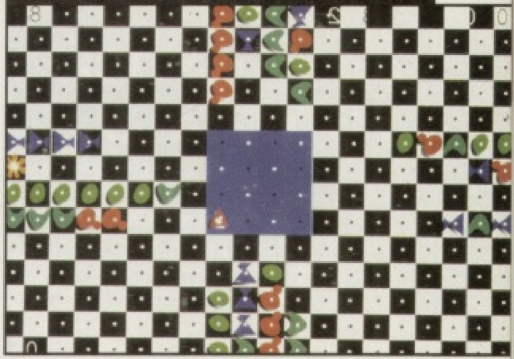
Back when Pamela Anderson was nothing more than a flat-chested nobody, it was the curvaceous Erika Eleniak setting Baywatch fans' underpants a-fluttering. After leaving everyone's favourite TV sex show she made a move into the movies, where she provided two of the best reasons for going to see the Steven Seagal actioner Under Siege, and the only sane excuse for actually paying to see the dreadful Beverly Hillbillies.

And now — steady on, lads — she's coming to a PC near you this Summer. In Panic In The Park, Erika E-lovely plays a dual role as a pair of twins, one good, one evil, who are competing to find the missing deeds to an old amusement park. The elusive deeds are actually hidden in the park itself, and to find them you, as the good twin, must successfully play a series of fun-fair-style mini-games.

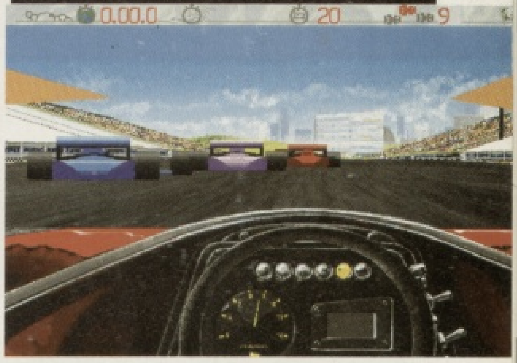
● *Panic In The Park will be released this August.*



It's an odd name for a game, but then Viacom's *Zoop* is an odd game. Boasting colourful graphics and addictive gameplay, Zoopsters are caught in a four-way crossfire with just their reflexes and a stack of bombs to get them through to the next level. Scheduled for a Winter release, could this be the game to beat Tetris in terms of playability?



Mindscape obviously has a bit of a thing about racing games — not only is it releasing CyberSpeed in Autumn, it's also got *Al Unser Jr's Arcade Racing* due this Summer. Created by Atreid, the French geezers behind the beat-'em-up Warriors, we're promised that AUJAR will be the fastest rubber-burner on PC.



The Raven Project

Mindscape

It's easy to guess who developed The Raven Project just by looking at the gorgeous graphics. Cryo have long been renowned for games that are cosmetically second-to-none, and their latest is no exception. What's more, the French developers have even bunged in a sizeable chunk of gameplay for good measure! Hoorahs all round, we think!

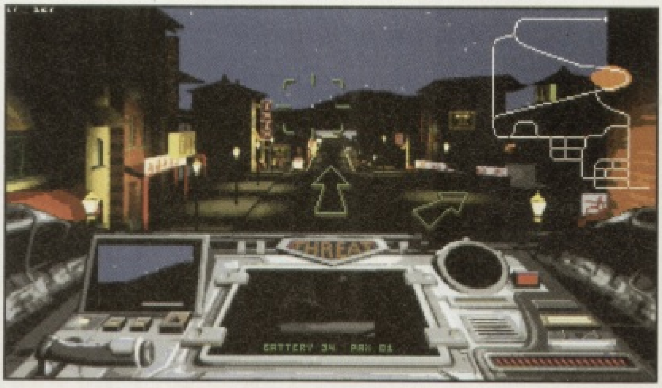
The Raven Project is a shoot-'em-up divided into a three specific stages, the first of which takes places across the streets of San Francisco. The aliens have invaded, leaving you with no option but to take to the skies in your hi-tech skimmer and wipe the buggers out! At first the ship flies under automatic pilot, leaving you free to man the guns while it follows a pre-rendered flight path.

Working your way through the maze of streets by choosing which way to turn at each junction, the action then changes slightly as you head out to the desert where the alien forces have shacked up. This stage is vastly different from the last as you're free to fly in any direction, skimming over the Voxel-spaced landscape at tremendous speed.

Finally the battle resumes in the depths of outer space, the aliens having been forced to retreat back to their mothership. Obviously the extra-terrestrial muthas aren't too happy about this, so don't expect to be invited in for a cup of tea and a slice of Martian cake!

Combining the best elements of Rebel Assault with Comanche-style sub-sections, The Raven Project should prove to be a hit when it's released later this year.

● *The Raven Project is due for release this Autumn.*



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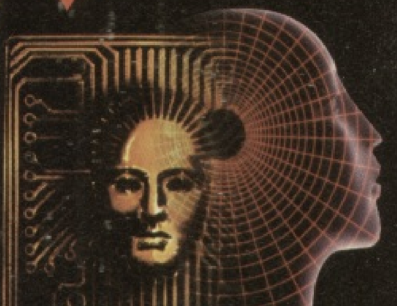

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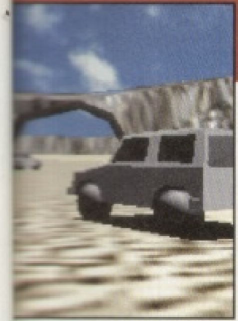
previews

At last, we conclude our exclusive preview of Cryo's stunning Aliens, but that's not the only game that looks set to dominate the PC. Read on to find out more...



Air Power..34

Rowan Software return to the skies with their finest hour yet, the magnificent Air Power. Combining RPG elements with frantic dogfighting and aerial combat, have they managed to create the ultimate flight sim? David Upchurch investigates.

Z..38

The Bitmap Brothers have kept their latest project under close wraps. Now, after three years of hushed silence, Z has finally broken out and is currently causing a storm across the nation. David Upchurch travelled to Wapping to see what all the fuss is about.

Dr Drago's MadCap Chase..40

It sure is a zany title, but that's hardly surprisingly because Blue Byte's latest is one crazy product! It's essentially a boardgame where you won't get bored, or at least that's what David Upchurch reckons.

Aliens Part 3..42

Has it really been three months since the egg hatched and Cryo's Aliens popped out? Since then the game has progressed in leaps in bounds, and the French developers are currently adding the finishing touches to what promises to be their best game yet. Crossing the Channel to their Paris-based HQ, Alex Simmons returned to Cryo for the last time.

Team 17: The Magnificent 17..44

Up until now Team 17 has been renowned mainly as a Amiga games developers but when it comes to the PC, they've yet to establish a decent reputation. With their next generation of releases just on the horizon, the Wakefield-based developers are hoping this is all about to change. Alex Simmons ventured up to distant Yorkshire in search of Brian Glover, but instead was confronted by some of the best games he's seen in a long time.

Power To

Rowan Software are THE flight sim kings — they even design training sims for the RAF! So it's fairly unsurprising that Air Power, Rowan's new game, has 'flying bits' in it. For a change though, the company has thrown in RPG elements too. David Upchurch checks it out...

Rowan Software's previous offerings have concentrated on 'real life' combat situations — World War II in Overlord, World War I in Dawn Patrol. But for Air Power, its new flight 'sim', the company has headed for the fictional parallel world of Karinthia, a place where technology has effectively been frozen at the same level ours was between the two World Wars.

According to Air Power's plot, this Karinthia place has been ruled by the Arayan dynasty for centuries. However, one black day the Emperor and all immediate heirs to the throne snuff it in highly suspicious circumstances, leaving behind four heirs who must fight it out to see who becomes king of the castle.

You play one of the four siblings, each of which has different characteristics. Whoever you play though, the aim of the game is essentially the same: travel around the gameworld in your airship HQ (which doubles as a sort of 'floating aircraft carrier'), calling on various towns and cities to, er, 'persuade' the natives to join your side. You keep doing this until your forces are finally strong enough to storm the capital city and claim the throne.

After the semi-educational multimedia approach of Dawn Patrol (which featured over a hundred pages of 'vaguely interesting but not for very long' facts and figures about the First World War), it's good to see that Rowan has once focused on good old gameplay with Air Power.

However, while sim purists may be slightly dismayed by Air Power's 'alternate reality' scenario, it's actually not quite as far-fetched as it first sounds. Apparently the US Navy toyed with the idea of launching fighter planes from airships many years ago, until The Powers That Be decided it was a bad idea. But as Steve Whittle, Mindscape's senior producer and the man overseeing Air Power's development, puts it: "It's a nice angle. Rowan felt that the World War I and World War II settings had been used so much, and they just wanted to do something new and different."

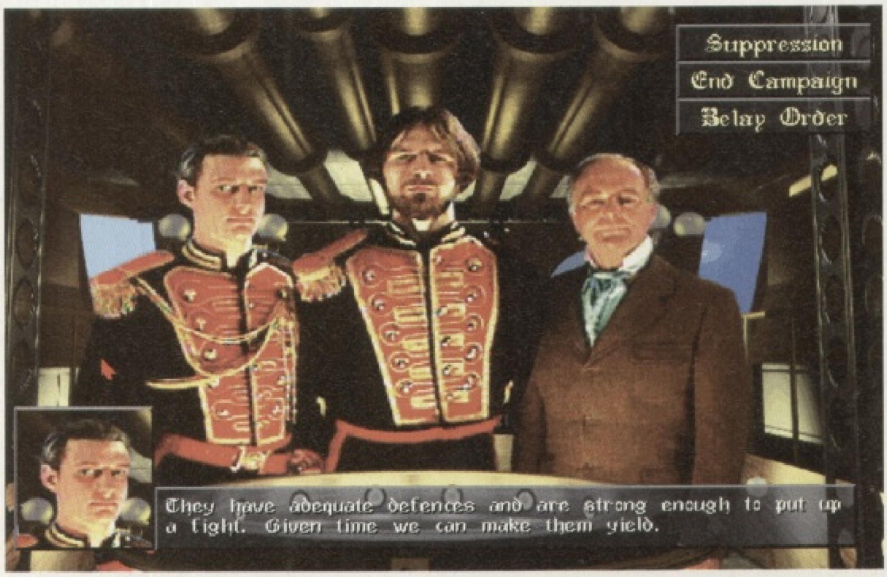
Naturally, all the aircraft are fictional too but, as Whittle points out: "Obviously no-one's going to be able to say the flight dynamics of this game are wrong because this is not real. That said most of the aircraft are based on a hybrid of World War I and World War II fighter planes, and Rowan has tried to make the aerodynamics of the planes as accurate as they can possibly be to the shape that [the aircraft] are."

GAME	AIR POWER
PUBLISHER	MINDSCAPE
DEVELOPER	ROWAN SOFTWARE
WORK *STARTED*	FEBRUARY 1994
DUE FOR *COMPLETION*	JUNE 1995

On entering into the game you're confronted with a 3D representation of the four different types of flagship. You can choose any of them, depending on what sort of campaign you opt for. Each flagship has two types of aircraft associated with them, each of which have very different characteristics and are cosmetically dissimilar too. Some airships contain nimble fighter planes more suited to dog-fighting, while other aircraft are more effective on ground assaults.

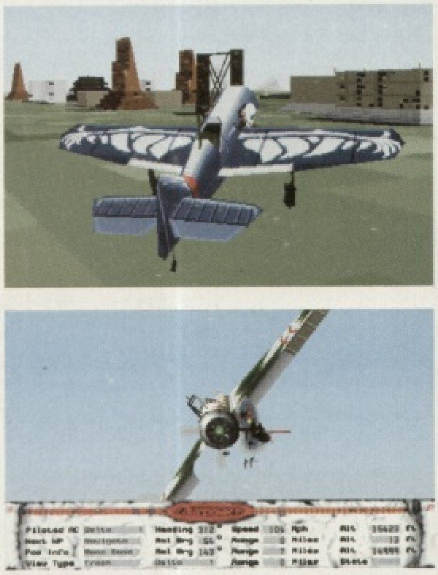
Having picked the flagship you're then confronted with a land map, showing both the location of your airship as well and the enemy HQs. Spread across the map are scores of black dots which indicate the towns and cities of Karinthia, these remaining neutral territory until someone conquers them or persuades them to join their campaign through diplomatic channels.

The player can try to muster support either using diplomacy or just



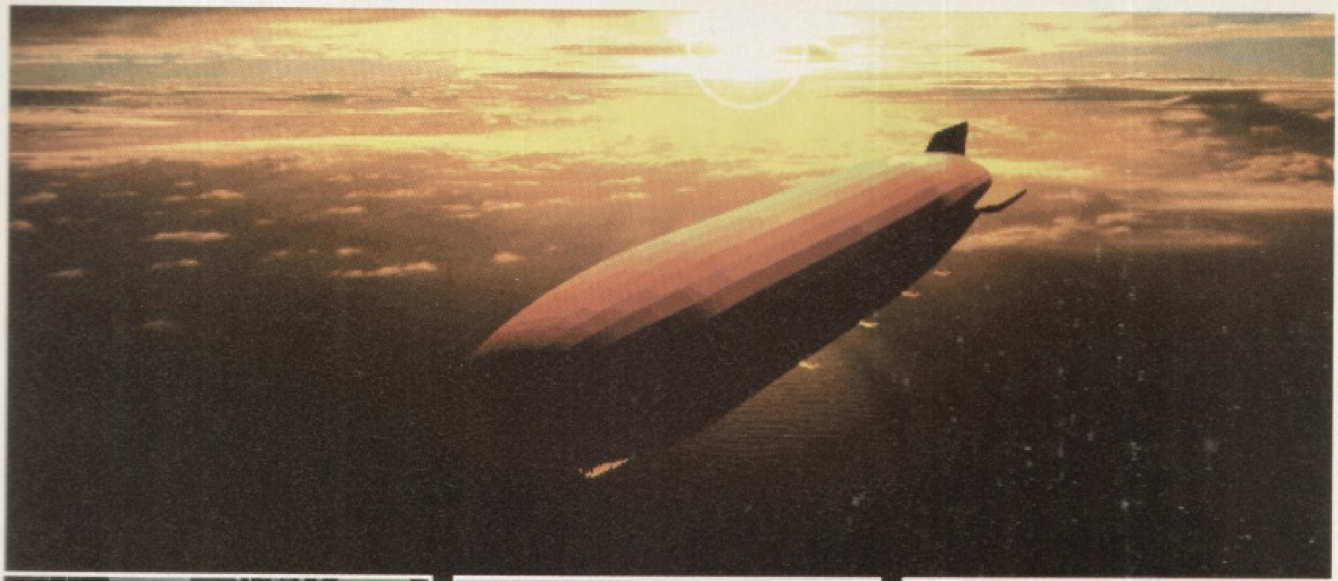
They have adequate defences and are strong enough to put up a fight. Given time we can make them yield.

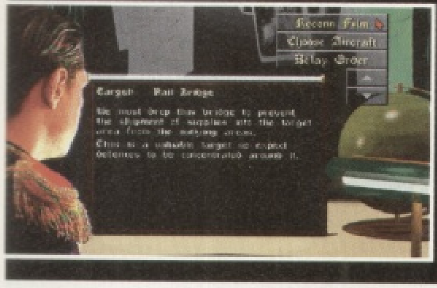
(Above) Onboard your airship you have a trio of loyal advisors who'll gladly report vital information to you and also offer you advice from time to time. See that bloke in the boring brown suit with the cravate? He's your bank manager, he is.



(Above) Air Power offers the player a whole host of in-cockpit and out-of-cockpit views to choose from.

The People

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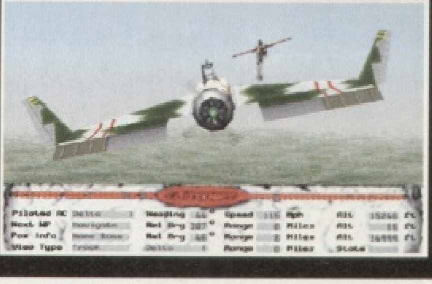
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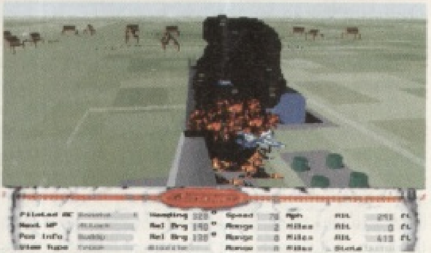
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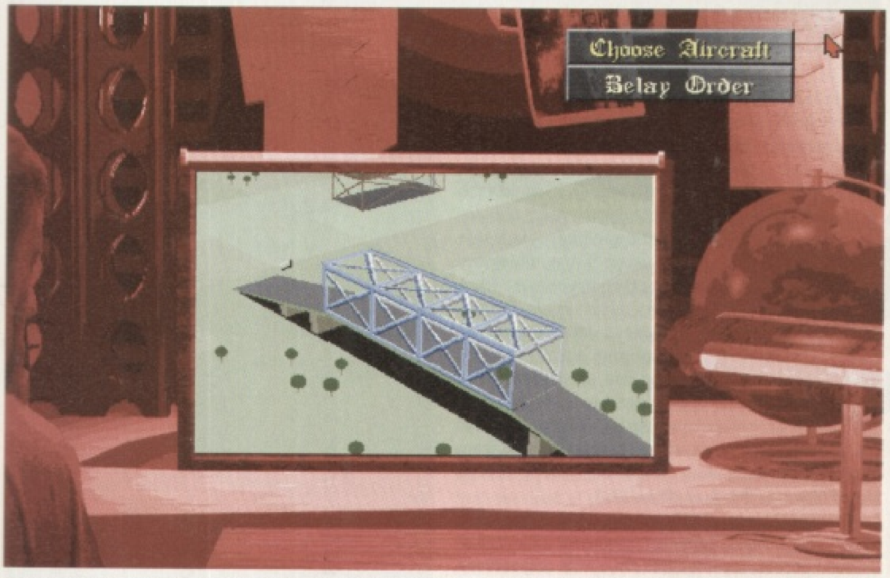
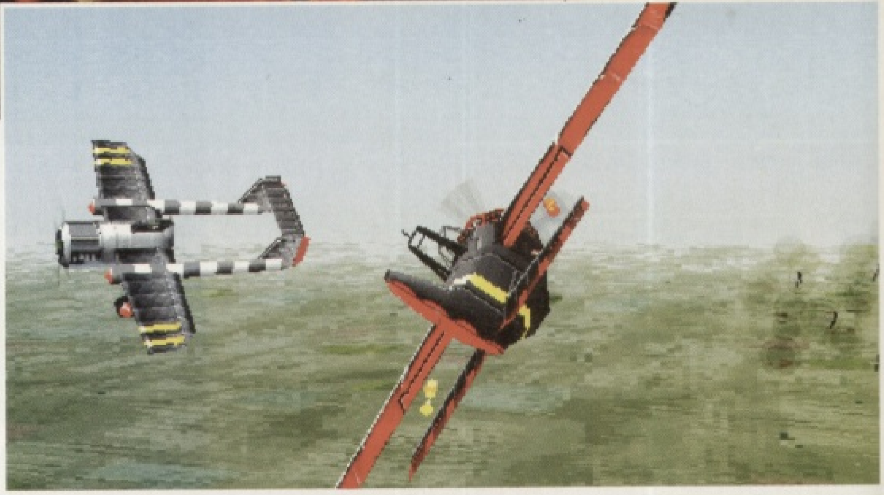

Choose Aircraft
Belay Order

(Above) Before you attack a target you're shown what it looks like in a brief clip of film taken by one of your reconnaissance aircraft. What good this information does you is unclear, but it looks nice if nothing else.

brute force — pick the latter and you'll have to choose between siege or suppression. In suppression mode you engage military targets in an all-out attack, launching aircraft against the enemy and generally co-ordinating the assault. At any point you can jump into the cockpit of any aircraft taking part in the battle and assume control yourself, allowing you to indulge in some dogfighting action.

In siege mode, on the other hand, a 3D camera scans the immediate area for possible enemy targets, allowing you to then cripple the nearby village or city by destroying its food supplies. What this basically means is that you must destroy flocks of sheep and other cattle on which the village depends, leaving them without a reliable source of food. Okay, so it's not politically correct but it's great fun anyway. Again you can fly the mission yourself, selecting the type of aircraft that is launched before the sortie begins.

One of the most striking differences between Air Power and its predecessors is that while there's plenty of air-to-air combat to get stuck into, as well as hard-core dogfighting and bombing missions, the game also contains an RPG element. Thus, instead of moving from place to place with all guns blazing, you can use your Diplomat to get the locals on your side without having to resort to force.



(Above) As the tide of the war slowly starts to turn against you, your subjects begin getting a little feisty...

(Right) A dogfight in action. All the planes are based on aviation ideas taken from WW1 and WW2 aircraft.

"The game started off as very simple and straightforward," explains Whittle, "but we thought we could do a little bit more with it. We wanted to make it interesting so people would actually use the diplomacy as well as the all-out fighting, so there's been a lot of work to make it as detailed as possible. You don't have to use it though — it's just there if people fancy a change. It's quite enjoyable using the system, but I wouldn't say it makes Air Power a role-playing game in its own right."

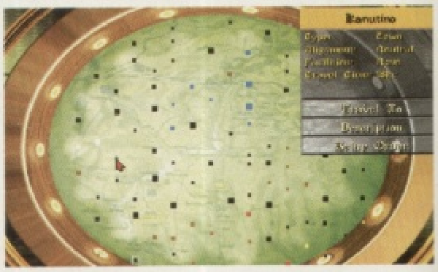
Whittle then explains how the diplomacy system works: "When you choose a destination you're given a brief description of it, telling you how long it will take to reach. Sometimes further information is given, which can be quite important if you're going to try for a diplomatic solution.

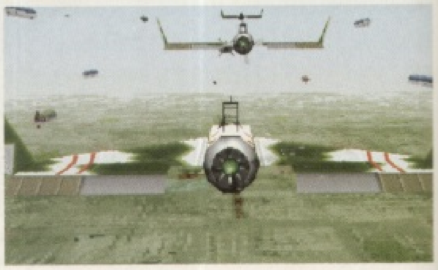
"For example, one of the town mayors might have been a great war hero. He might ask you if you know him and, if you give the wrong answer, you're not likely to get any support. The information is gathered automatically by your spies who fly out ahead, but you have to be cautious of the information they give you — it might be dud information being fed to them to throw you off track."

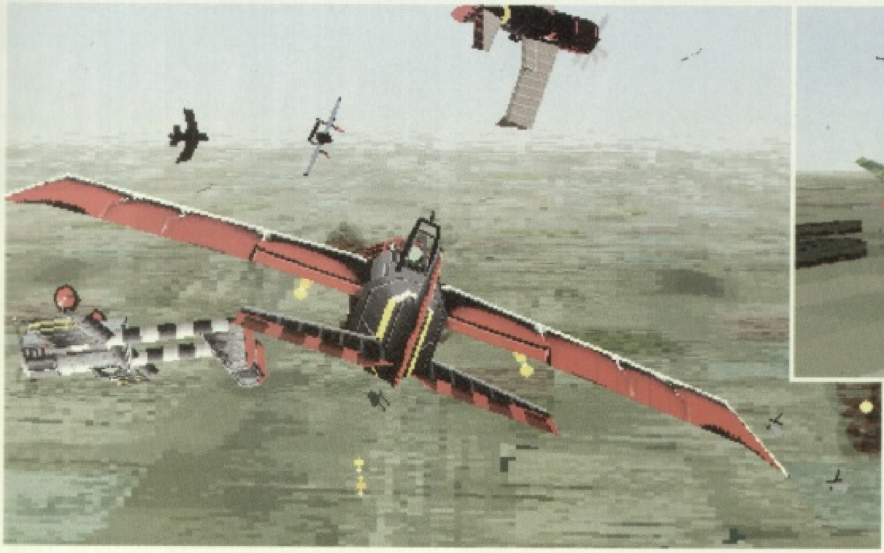
Whittle admits that some gamers might find Air Power a bit hard, which is why Rowan have helpfully added a training mode called Scramble. "This feature was put in so that the new player doesn't have to go in and start a new campaign," he explains. "Instead, they can go into the Scramble option and fly a variety of one-off missions, such as strike missions, fleet-to-fleet encounters... There's even one where you're dogfighting an ace pilot from an enemy faction who wants to fly up against the best, i.e. you..."

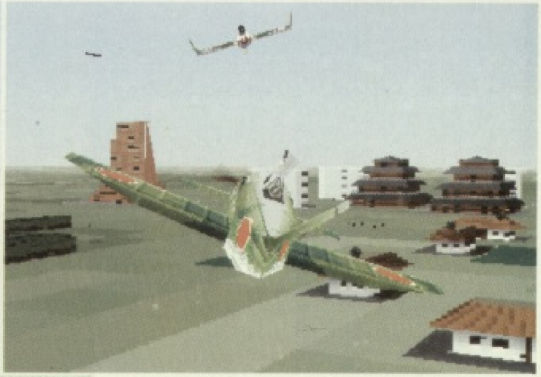
All the action happens in real time, so it could take six hours to reach a diplomatic solution — valuable time wasted if the diplomacy fails and you then have to use force which takes even longer. Prolonged attacks also run down your supplies, which mean you must then find a supply base to replenish your resources (during which time, of course, your opponents will be rushing around, conquering everything that moves and getting further ahead of you in the strength stakes).

On top of this lot, Air Power offers the player loads of options to choose from: you can go for unlimited or limited fuel, select vulnerability on or off, and vary the toughness of the enemy onslaughts. You can even change your starting position, opting to begin the

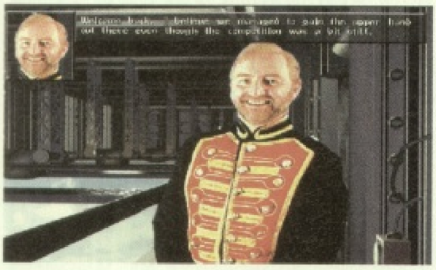


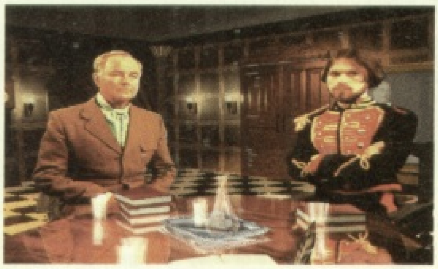






(Above) The quality of Air Power's ground detail is a significant improvement over that found in previous Rowan Software games. Remember the green polygon fields of Overlord's England?
(Left) Even when the screen gets crowded, Air Power doesn't slow down thanks to its unique screen rescaling routines.
(Below) Air Power isn't just about aerial dogfights — there's a strong RPG-style negotiating element too.





Up And At 'Em!

Rowan Software is certainly no stranger to the flight sim world. Formed in 1987, the company has spent the past six years mastering the subject. In fact, such is the realism of their various offerings they have even been commissioned to produce navigational training aids for the RAF. "Rowan have built up this vast pool of knowledge on stuff like the dynamics," says Whittle. "They live and breathe flight sims — Rowan do not do any other types of game, they are a flat-out flight sim company."

Past offerings include the graphically superb Overlord, which was was released last year to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the D-Day assault. Hailed by many as one of the best flight sims of the year, Overlord was set in the closing stages of the World War 2, focusing mainly on the battle for air supremacy in the run up to the Normandy landings.

A few months later came Dawn Patrol. Set during World War 1, Dawn Patrol was billed as more of a flight game than a flight sim, and featured a wealth of encyclopaedic information. In fact, it was positively brimming over with historical facts and figures, biographies of famous WWI pilots and hypertext links. Despite this, however, Dawn Patrol wasn't quite as playable or as absorbing as Overlord.

"Dawn Patrol was a World War 1 game which had an encyclopaedia element attached," points out Whittle. "Air Power, on the other hand, is purely a game. There are very few reference elements in it, although we are planning to show footage of the actual airships designed by the US Navy which the game's airships are based on."

attack either already 'in the air' or from the airship itself — in the latter case you're literally dropped from the carrier with no air speed, and so have to quickly kick in the engines and accelerate away.

A particularly neat feature is the Detail Level option. According to Whittle it's "a clever system that maintains frame rate regardless of what system the game is running on or the number and size of enemies on-screen. What I mean is, you could be running along quite nicely and then all of a sudden a huge 3D model comes up in front of you, in which case other sims would begin to slow down.

> "Rowan felt that the World War I and World War II settings had been used so much, and [with Air Power] they just wanted to do something new and different."
>
> Steve Whittle,
> Air Power's Producer.

"However, in Air Power the screen parameters actually change, so that the speed is maintained by changing the size of the viewing window. You can turn this feature on and off; if you're running the game on a Pentium you'll be able to have the windows as big as you like because it won't make any difference.

"But if you're playing on a slower 486 or a high-end 386 you're not going to have the same level of power, which is why this feature has been included. It's to make sure everyone can play the game at a respectable speed, so the game's still fun regardless of what machine you've got. It doesn't detract from the game at all — in fact, it improves the game. If you think about it, when you're watching TV you're not watching the width of the screen, you're just watching the action. Similarly with this you tend not to notice that the sides of the screen are shrinking a bit."

Another interesting feature is the game's virtual cockpit, which has been designed to give Air Power an extra degree of realism. "Most modern fighter pilots don't just look straight out of the front of the aircraft when they're flying around," laughs Whittle, "they look around all over the place and keep their eyes focused on the actual enemy ship. The 3D cockpit tries to emulate this effect."

Throughout the game there are numerous animated cutscenes and intermissions. The backgrounds for these sequences were all drawn in 3D Studio, the actors filmed against a blue screen and then 'matted in' to these backdrops by a professional video production team. The results speak for themselves — the superimposed actors look far more convincing than if they'd been rendered or drawn.

Air Power is now literally a few short weeks from completion, and it's shaping up to be something very special. "I'm confident that Air Power will appeal to the flight sim buffs, the ones who like Rowan's WWI and WWII games," concludes Whittle, "but I also hope that it'll attract new people to flight games, the sort of people who have seen other flying games and thought they looked a little bit boring.

"We've catered for a lot of tastes with this game. Some people like to play the strategy side of things, but if you don't fancy that you can just go straight in there with all guns blazing. This is not a linear game — it's an air combat strike strategy diplomacy sim [you what?] and you can take it any way you want."

This is all very well and good, but you don't have to take Mr Whittle's word for it — find out how good Air Power is for yourself with the exclusive demo in next month's issue!

The Game

At long last the Bitmap Brothers have unveiled their next game. It's called Z (for no readily apparent reason), it's a wargame (although not like any you've ever seen before) and it looks set to the hit of the Autumn (because it's excellent). David Upchurch goes behind enemy lines and takes a look...

(Above) Another battle won, the red robots celebrate by cracking open a few tins of Cyborg Spacial Brew (geddit?) and partying all night. Hey, after what they've been through, they deserve it...

GAME	Z
PUBLISHER	TIME WARNER INTERACTIVE
DEVELOPER	THE BITMAP BROTHERS
WORK *STARTED*	AUTUMN 1992
DUE FOR *COMPLETION*	SEPTEMBER 1995

(Bottom) A lot of Z's initial appeal comes from its impressive visuals. At first, it's great fun just going around and blowing things up so that you can witness the resulting pyrotechnics.

(Below) The robot and vehicle factories have different 'star' ratings. Basically, the more stars they have, the more varied and powerful the equipment they can manufacture.

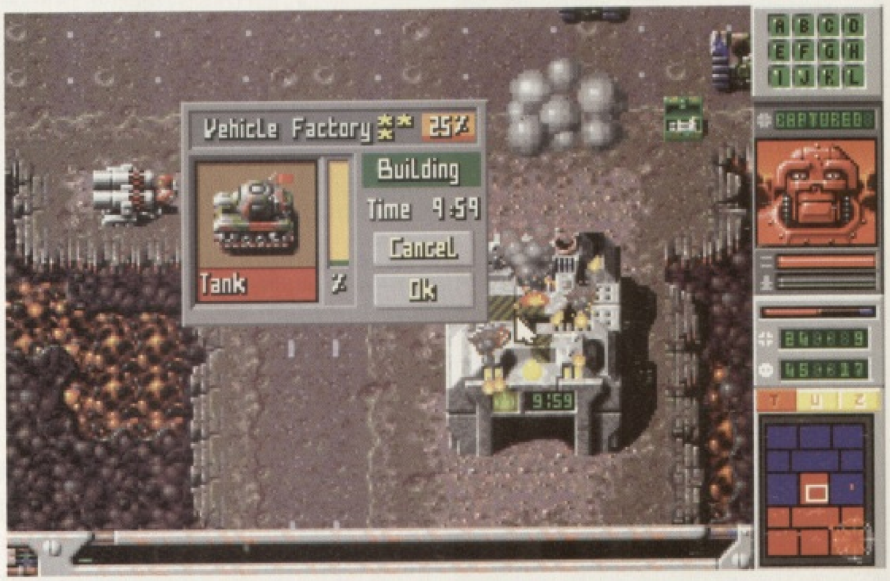
The Bitmap Brothers are notorious for three things: (1) they take an extraordinarily long time to develop their games; (2) they keep their projects under tight wraps until they're very nearly complete; and (3) the games they produce are never less than excellent.

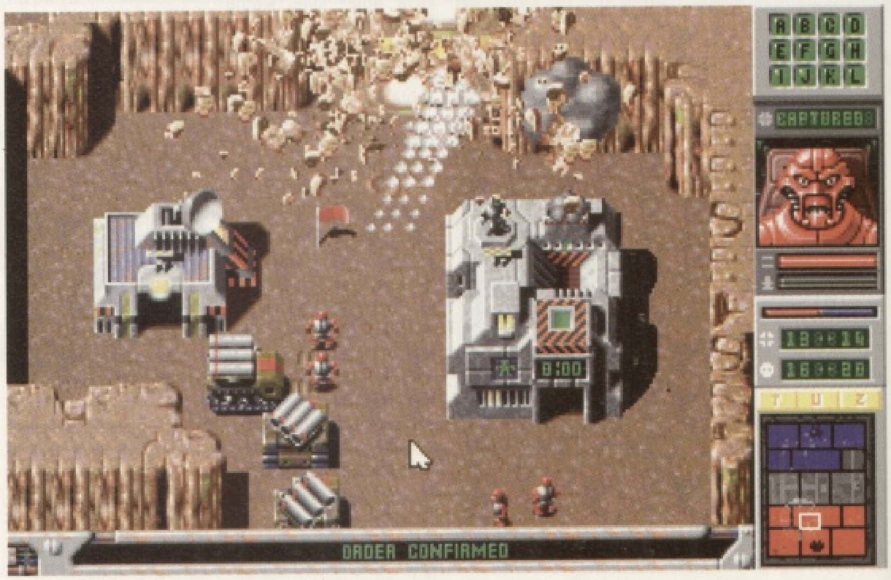
And Z, the Bitmaps' next release, seems pretty unlikely to buck the trend. It's been in development for nearly three years, and only now, some three months or so from its scheduled release date, have the Bitmaps decided that the time is finally right to unveil it to the hungry, salivating computer press. Oh, and it looks as if it's going to be completely excellent too — *of course*.

Unlike previous Bitmap Brothers games, such as Speedball 2 and The Chaos Engine, Z has been developed primarily with the PC in mind. It's a wargame in which you control an army of red robots battling for supremacy against a rival army of blue robots. There's no point going on about Z's plot too much because as Eric Matthews, one of the founding Bitmap Brothers and the game's designer, explains, there really isn't one: "There's no big 'save the world' scenario behind Z — the only reason these robots are fighting each other is because it's fun."

Each conflict takes place on a vast battlefield, with the red robots' HQ at one end and the blue robots' HQ at the other. The aim is simple: reach the enemy's HQ and blow it up before he blows up yours. The action starts as soon as the game starts — there's no faffing about building mines, barracks or such like. The battlefield is divided into zones containing robot and vehicle factories, and to gain control of them you simply have to claim the zone for 'your side' by touching a flag placed in each. However, if the enemy touch the flag after you then the zone becomes theirs, so you have to keep an eye out.

Capturing zones is vital, because not only do you gain control of the manufacturing centres in them, the number of zones you possess also increases your overall power, thereby extending the range of your radar look-out posts and speeding up the rate at which your factories produce equipment.





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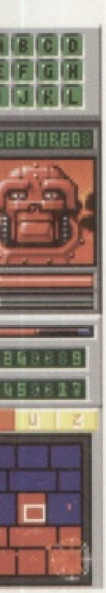
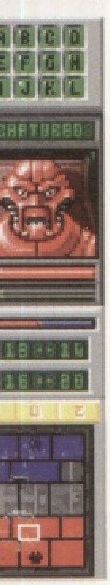




Everything is controlled with an ultra-simple mouse-driven interface — you just point-'n'-click on a platoon of soldiers or group of vehicles to activate them, then click elsewhere on the map to make them move or click on enemy units to make them attack. They're not thick, though — if you leave them alone and enemy troops attack, they'll defend themselves to the best of their abilities, and they'll even run away if things get too rough.

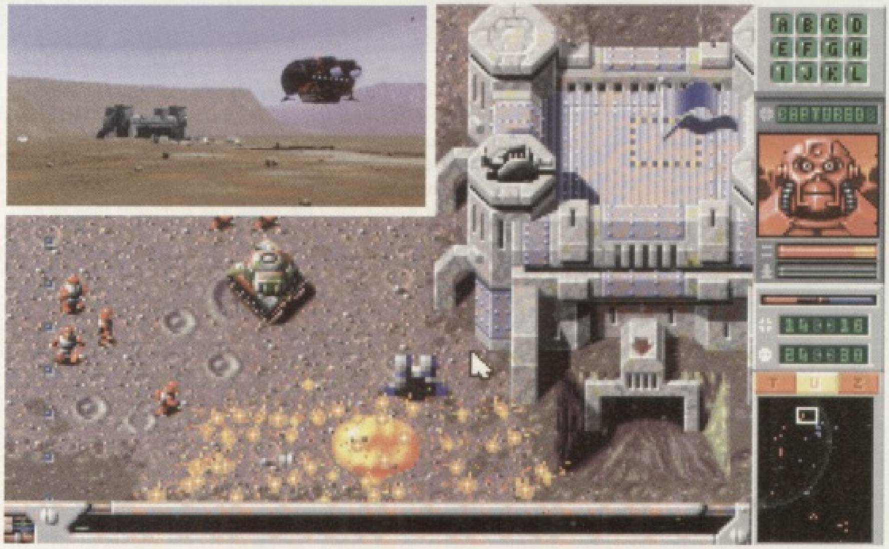
Although Z is the Bitmaps first attempt at a wargame, in many ways it's a natural evolution of what they've done before: "There were a lot of ideas in previous games to do with AI [artificial intelligence] and personalities," explains Matthews. "I mean, it goes right back to Speedball, which had a lot of stuff in it controlling how the other players reacted to what you did in the game. I found all those things quite interesting, and then I thought: 'Wouldn't it be good to make that the main focus of the game, or at least one of the game's major elements?'

"So we evolved this 'Little Computer People'-type idea, where you have these tiny robots, they each have a personality, and you care about them and you enjoy seeing how they respond to events, but ultimately you've got control over them. We then mixed that idea with the basics of a wargame."

> "There's no big 'save the world' scenario behind Z — the only reason these robots are fighting each other is because it's fun."
>
> Eric Matthews,
> The Bitmap Brothers.

"We hadn't really played that many wargames," continues Matthews. "I mean, we'd seen them and we'd toyed with them, but they always seemed to be constrained by their history, in the sense that they were typically translations of boardgames. The battles just weren't intense and they didn't reflect what you'd imagine the mayhem of the real thing would be like.

"Then we had this idea of focussing on the battle side of things rather than the strategic. Usually with wargames you have to wade through a huge manual before you can make a move, then what you see on-screen isn't very interesting, the gameplay is all turn-based and it's restricted to a grid. So we dispensed with all the boring things, made our game take place in real-time, made it look like an action game, and so on."



(Above) Here, the blue robots suddenly realise it'll take a bit more than foot soldiers armed with pea-shooters to defend this factory from the invading platoon of red missile launchers...

The most obvious comparison is with Westwood Studio's excellent Dune 2, but Matthews begs to differ: "I think Dune 2 is a very good game, but it's a lot different to Z. The basic premise of the two games is superficially alike — the perspective is similar and you've got hardware in there like tanks and missile launchers, but the comparisons end there. I think the only reason people compare Z to Dune 2 because there aren't that may games around like them. Battle Isle, perhaps. WarCraft, obviously — but then, that's basically Dune 2 with orcs.

"Westwood seem to have had the same idea of 'Let's try to make a more easy-to-get-into wargame', but it still feels fairly turn-based. I mean, it's still played on a grid — they just haven't shown the grid. In Dune 2 you spend a lot of time building up your resources, constructing buildings, etc, and then after an hour you go and have a scrap. In Z, on the other hand, you're having a scrap *all* the time."

And what scraps they are, too. The carnage level in Z is extreme to say the least. Zapped robots somersault up high into the air, blasted tanks explode into a zillion pieces of searing shrapnel, and demolished buildings spew out fountains of burning rubble and fire-blackened debris. It's so good, that sometimes you get the perverse urge to send your troops into a 'no-win' situation, just so that you can sit back and watch the ensuing fireworks display.

But just as impressive as the graphic work is the behind-the-scenes trickery. Although Z may look like an arcade game, it packs just as much of a tactical challenge as any hex-based wargame. The robots come in different 'flavours' — some are strong but stupid, others are good at shooting but weak, and so on — and it's all down to how you use these robots, in conjunction with the tanks, missile launchers, gun turrets and other vehicles in your armoury, that governs whether you'll win or lose a battle.

The computer opponent is a clever sod too, and sneaky with it — all too often you think you've got him beat, only to find that he's somehow managed to send a lone robot behind your lines without you noticing and is about to torch your HQ! And even if you do eventually beat the computer, there's a planned network option that'll allow up to four players to compete head-to-head.

I know we're not meant to pass judgement on the games we preview because they're not finished and everything, but unless the Bitmaps make some extreme errors of judgement between now and Z's September launch date, I can't see how the game will fail to be anything but a massive hit. Reserve me a copy now...

The general pops up every so often on the between-level 'congratulations' animations. Believe it or not, he's actually based on the Robert Duvall character in Apocalypse Now.

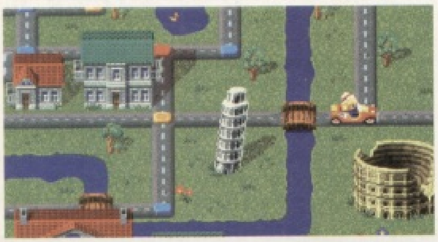
Board Silly

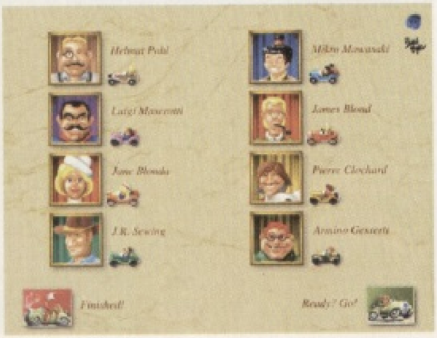
Blue Byte is probably best known as the company responsible for the intense Battle Isle strategy sims. However, its next release is a family-orientated game in a much lighter vein. David Upchurch joined the chase...

Aren't Bank Holidays a really crap waste of time? It always seems to pour down with rain (although you can bet that when you get back to work it will be gloriously sunny), all the pubs are operating to Sunday opening hours (i.e. they might as well not bother opening at all) and everything else is closed.

So what do you end up doing? Yup, that's right — sitting in front of the telly all day, watching old 50's Hollywood 'epics' like Ben Hur or Spartacus that you've probably seen at least four billion times before. However, occasionally — just occasionally, mind — the people who decide what goes on telly treat us to something like Monte Carlo Or Bust. You must have seen it — it's sort of a live version of the Wacky Races, in which an assortment of top comic actors compete in a crazy, no-holds-barred race across Europe.

And why am I going on about it? Because Blue Byte's imminent release, Dr Drago's Madcap Chase, could easily be the official Monte Carlo Or Bust tie-in. Sadly, I suspect that the reason it isn't is because, while I think Monte Carlo Or Bust is a neglected classic, the rest of the world, erm, doesn't. Oh well...





Up to eight competitors can race in Dr Drago's Madcap Chase, and can be placed under either human or computer control. Note the 'hilarious' names of the racers. Oh, those *crazy* German programmers...

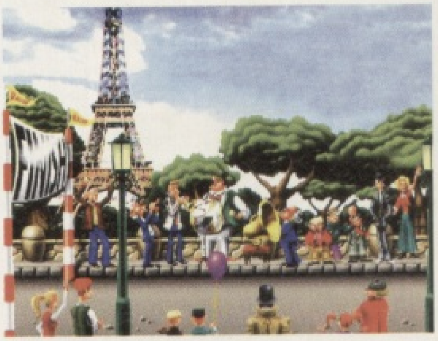
Dr Drago's Madcap Chase is basically a boardgame on PC which can be enjoyed by up to eight human or computer-controlled players. At the start of the game the computer randomly selects a target destination, say Berlin, Tunis or Paris, and the first player to reach it wins a big cash prize. The computer then selects another destination, and the race starts all over again. You choose how many cities you want to race to (and thus the length of the game) and the winner is the person with the most money at the end of the game.

Play takes place in turns, with each player having the option either to roll the dice and move or to play a Chance card. You start the game with three Chance cards, and these give you various bonuses. Some can be played on yourself, allowing you to increase the number of times you can roll the dice and so on, while others can be used to nobble your rivals, forcing them to miss a go or preventing them from playing their own Chance cards.

Each 'space' on the board has various properties, both good and bad. Red spaces take money off you, blue spaces give you money, gold spaces randomly award you another Chance card, and purple spaces let you buy a Chance card (your bank balance permitting). There are also grey spaces, where you can buy properties in Monopoly-like fashion. Properties are extremely important as they generate loads of cash in rent each and every year.

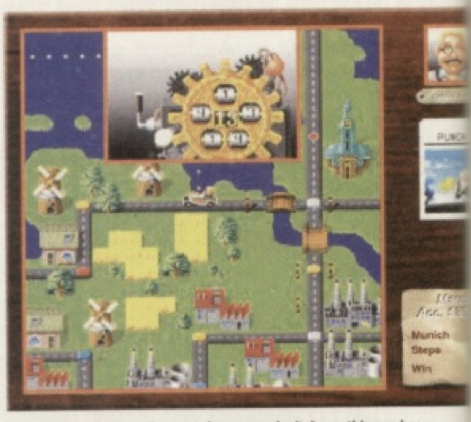
The game is full of random events. Storms can flood out whole areas of the map, mountain avalanches block off roads and then, of course, there's Dr Drago himself. Drago latches himself onto the player lagging behind the rest of the pack, and every turn drains money away from them. Luckily, Drago can be passed onto other players, simply by 'tagging' them, i.e. driving past them.

According to Blue Byte, Dr Drago's Madcap Chase is "designed to be played and enjoyed by the whole family, from your 8-year-old kid sister to your 80-year-old granny. It's a game that you'll be able to enjoy with a group of friends over a few beers." Well, anything with a few beers involved can't be all bad, and you'll be able to find out if Blue Byte has managed to achieve what it set out to do next month, when we'll have a full review.



There's a big cash prize for the person who's the first to make it to the target destination. Here, party-goers line the streets of Paris to welcome the winner of the current stage in the Chase.

GAME	DR DRAGO'S MADCAP CHASE
PUBLISHER	BLUE BYTE
DEVELOPER	IN-HOUSE
WORK *STARTED*	SUMMER 1994
DUE FOR *COMPLETION*	JUNE 1995



In Dr Drago's Madcap Chase, each turn you don't do anything so boring as roll dice to decide how far you can move. Oh no. Instead, your quota is determined by playing on a Jules Verne-ish fruit machine. Why not hold my plums for a big suprise...?

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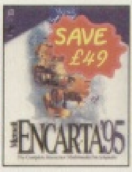

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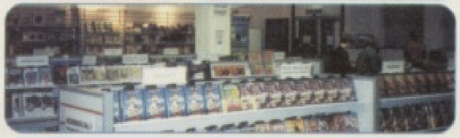

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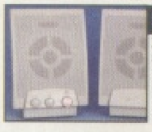

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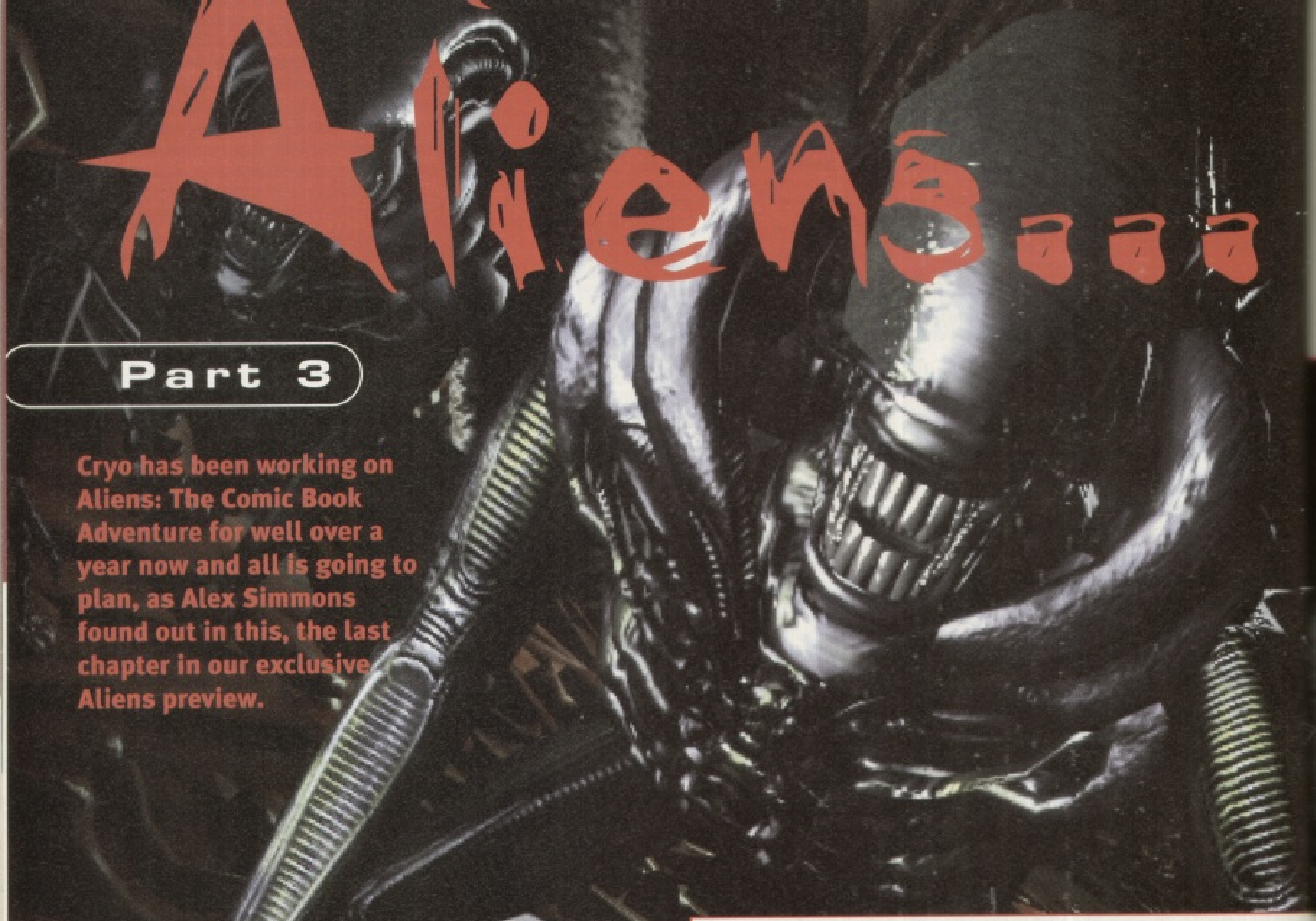
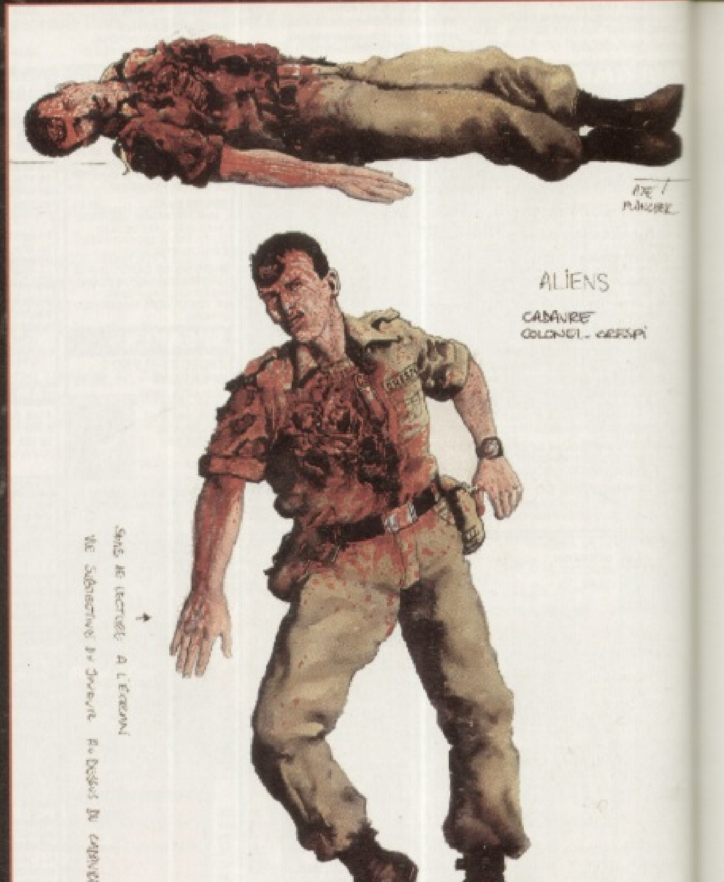
Aliens...

Part 3



Cryo has been working on Aliens: The Comic Book Adventure for well over a year now and all is going to plan, as Alex Simmons found out in this, the last chapter in our exclusive Aliens preview.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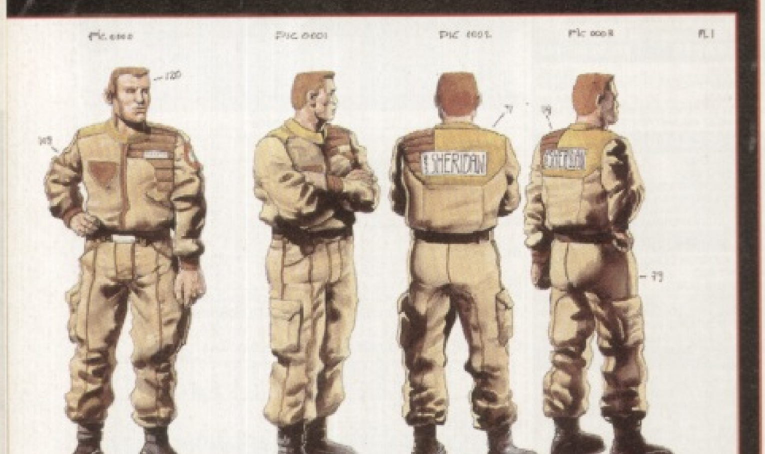
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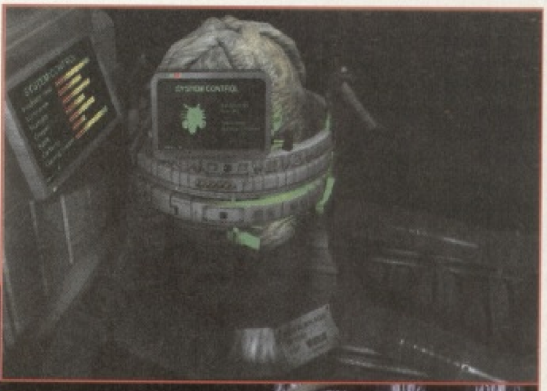
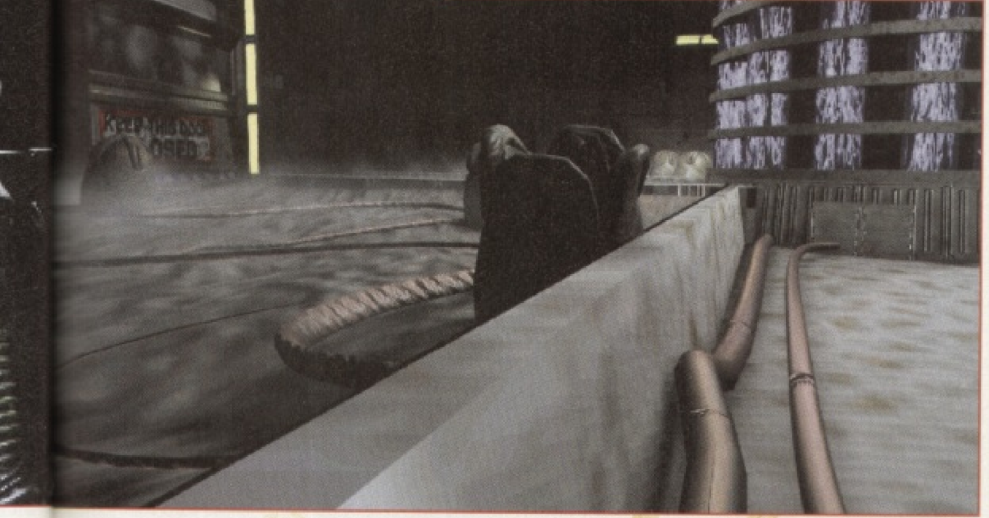
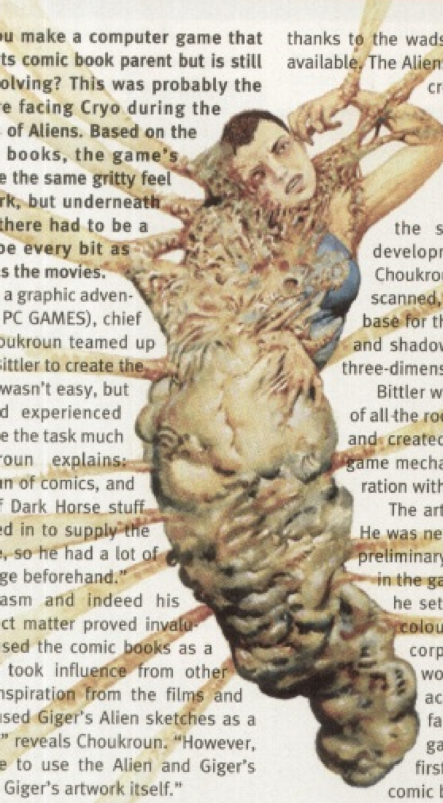
(Right) One of the Sheridan's crew members takes a closer look at one of the Alien eggs.
(Below) Virtually all the artwork for the game, including the backgrounds, was drawn by hand first and then scanned into 3D Studio.
(Below left) These are just a couple of Bernard Bittler's conceptual sketches for Aliens: The Comic Book Adventure. As you can probably see, the majority are watercolour paintings, and other preliminary drawings feature images of an entirely new hybrid of Alien.







GAME	ALIENS
PUBLISHER	MINDSCAPE
DEVELOPER	CRYO
WORK *STARTED*	FEBRUARY 1994
DUE FOR *COMPLETION*	AUTUMN 1995

How the hell do you make a computer game that remains faithful to its comic book parent but is still interactive and involving? This was probably the toughest challenge facing Cryo during the development stages of Aliens. Based on the bleak Dark Horse books, the game's graphics had to have the same gritty feel of the comic artwork, but underneath the glossy facade there had to be a game that would be every bit as tense and gripping as the movies.

Having settled on a graphic adventure (see Issue 11 of PC GAMES), chief designer Nicolas Choukroun teamed up with artist Bernard Bittler to create the game's visuals. This wasn't easy, but using a skilled and experienced artist like Bittler made the task much easier, as Choukroun explains: "[Bittler] is a great fan of comics, and he had read a lot of Dark Horse stuff before he was drafted in to supply the artwork for the game, so he had a lot of background knowledge beforehand."

Bittler's enthusiasm and indeed his interest of the subject matter proved invaluable, and while he used the comic books as a foundation, he also took influence from other sources. "Drawing inspiration from the films and comics, Bittler also used Giger's Alien sketches as a basis for his artwork," reveals Choukroun. "However, although we are free to use the Alien and Giger's world, we cannot use Giger's artwork itself."

Therefore every image had to be created from scratch — a mammoth task for just one artist, although Bittler's job was made much less stressful thanks to the wads of background material already available. The Aliens were therefore relatively easy to create (although Bittler designed a totally new hybrid Alien which appears later in the game), and were first designed on paper then rendered in 3D Studio.

This process was pretty much the standard used throughout the development of the game, offers Choukroun: "Bittler's paper drawings were scanned, and then we used the results as a base for the 3D Studio images. The lighting and shadows are then added to give a real three-dimensional feel."

Bittler was also responsible for the design of all the rooms as well as the Alien sketches, and created both the appearance and the game mechanics of every location in collaboration with Choukroun.

The artist's job didn't end there, either. He was needed to produce the hundreds of preliminary drawings that would be featured in the game itself or just for ideas, and so he set about creating countless watercolour paintings of dismembered corpses, cocooned colonists and wounded soldiers that lay strewn across the ransacked colony. In fact, almost every aspect of the game was sketched out by hand first, to give the game the authentic comic book feel Cryo was looking for.

However, because comics and computer games are two vastly different mediums, the designers of Aliens were limited as to how far they could blend the two. They decided that while the backdrops and static character portraits would be created by Bittler, the actual moving images were brought to life by Cryo's team of 3D Studio artists who rendered the crew exoskeletons, the Aliens and such like. The two combine perfectly, and while the slick SVGA scenes inject cinematic atmosphere into the game, the hand-painted images help the game retain its comic book roots.

But while the graphics featured in Aliens are nothing less than stunning, without the sweeping soundtrack all atmosphere and tension would be lost. It was again up to Nicolas Choukroun to compose a suitably stark, eerie musical score to match the dark, foreboding visuals. Considering Choukroun was bogged down with virtually every other aspect of the game, he accomplished this with surprising ease, and has written almost every piece of music before the game has even been finished!

The final — and perhaps most important — part of the sound mix, the digitised speech, has yet to be recorded, as the lines of dialogue haven't yet been finalised (they haven't been translated from French to English yet) and casting the right voice for each crew members is a time-consuming process.

However, Cryo are confident that work will be complete in time for its Autumn release. If you can't wait until then, keep your eyes peeled for a future issue of PC GAMES when we'll be bringing you an exclusive CoverCD demo of Cryo's awesome Aliens.

Looking Forward

The future for Cryo looks very bright indeed, as the French developers have a number of projects already underway and even more on the horizon. With the release of Aliens this Autumn it looks as though Cryo have finally achieved the perfect balance between awe-inspiring graphics and gripping gameplay, something which should also reflect in Dragon Lore 2. Obviously the sequel to their previous not-too-impressive adventure, Cryo assure us DL2 will be a vast improvement in terms of both gameplay and presentation, although don't expect to see it surface until sometime next year.

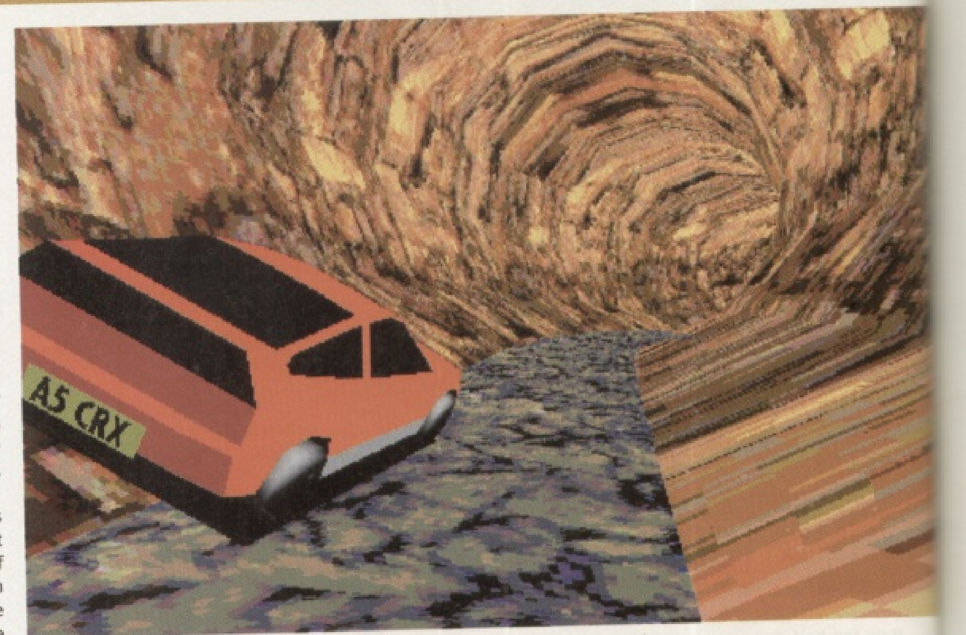
A sequel to MegaRace is also on the cards, titled (somewhat unsurprisingly) MegaRace 2. Retaining the same high-level graphics and sound of the original, the gameplay is again said to be significantly enhanced to make the game far more exciting and addictive than its parent. Like DL2, Mega Race 2 won't appear until 1996, but due for release near the end of this year is Raven Project.

An action-packed shoot-'em-up featuring (yep, you've guessed it) rendered graphics, Raven Project oozes atmosphere and has a very cinematic quality about it, so expect it to be a damn sight more impressive (and hopefully more interactive) than most other CD-shooters currently available.

Cryo also have a handful of other titles on the boil, but are remaining understandably tight-lipped as they don't want to give anything away at this early stage. Maybe they're already sketching out ideas for the sequel to Aliens? Who knows?

The Magn

Alex Simmons journeyed to Team 17's HQ in Wakefield and discovered that, in the near future, Hovis and Brian Glover won't be the only things Yorkshire is famous for.



Ask any Amiga owner who publishes the best games for their 16-bit computer, and they'll undoubtedly reply Team 17. Over the past few years the Wakefield-based developer has built up a cult following of avid game fanatics looking for the very best in home computer entertainment. But, as we are all aware, the Amiga is on its death-bed, making way for the next generation of super consoles and, of course, the mighty PC. So what are Team 17's plans for the future?

Team 17 has been developing PC-specific titles (as opposed to Amiga conversions) for about a year, but it's only now that they're beginning to see the light of day. The reason for this is simple, and one which affects many of the smaller developers across the nation — lack of resources. Creating a computer game isn't as easy as it used to be, and vast programming teams with access to all the latest hyper-expensive development equipment is now a must-have necessity, not just a luxury.

Due to its relatively small size, Team 17 has found it difficult to keep up with the big boys like Origin *et al*, as Alan Bunker, the company's Media Manager, explains: "Being an Amiga-based company we just haven't got the internal resources to be able to expand into, say, the cartridge market. That kind of thing takes a lot of money, people, resource and so on. Now, at a time when the software business is getting more corporate, you need more investment."

This is all too true — which explains why Team 17 recently announced that it is linking up with Mancunian software giant Ocean Software. "We had quite a few companies interested," explains Bunker, "but Ocean offered us the better deal. They're also drinking Northerners — and any drinking Northerners are fine by us!"

Ocean and Team 17 first discussed their plans for the future at the European Computer Trade Show last March, and shortly after a two-year publishing deal was signed. Now the gaming world is quite literally at Team 17's feet; with its newly-found capital, Team 17 can at last start concentrating on developing not only for the PC, but also for the PlayStation and the Saturn, amongst others.

However, surely linking up with a company like Ocean affects Team 17's independence? Does this deal mean that Team 17 has sold out? "No way!" replies Bunker. "It's a joint publishing deal. At the end of the day Team 17 are 100% independent and that's something we really want to stress. Team 17 have a cult following and we don't want to lose that, we just want to expand on it. If we get associated with somebody else we'll lose the whole image we've created. Ocean are quite keen to maintain the Team 17 image as well, which is really our 'Take no s**t' attitude, and to get good games out there and hopefully satisfy the games-player."

So Team 17 are pretty much free to do what they want, to continue to release 'real games created by real games-players'. And judging by the games that are already in development, I think they're right...

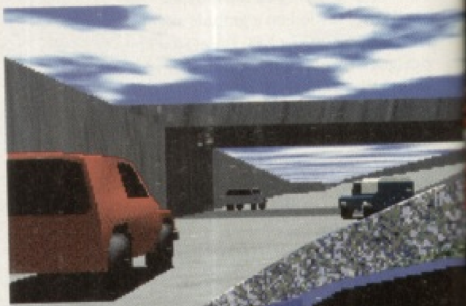
Rollcage

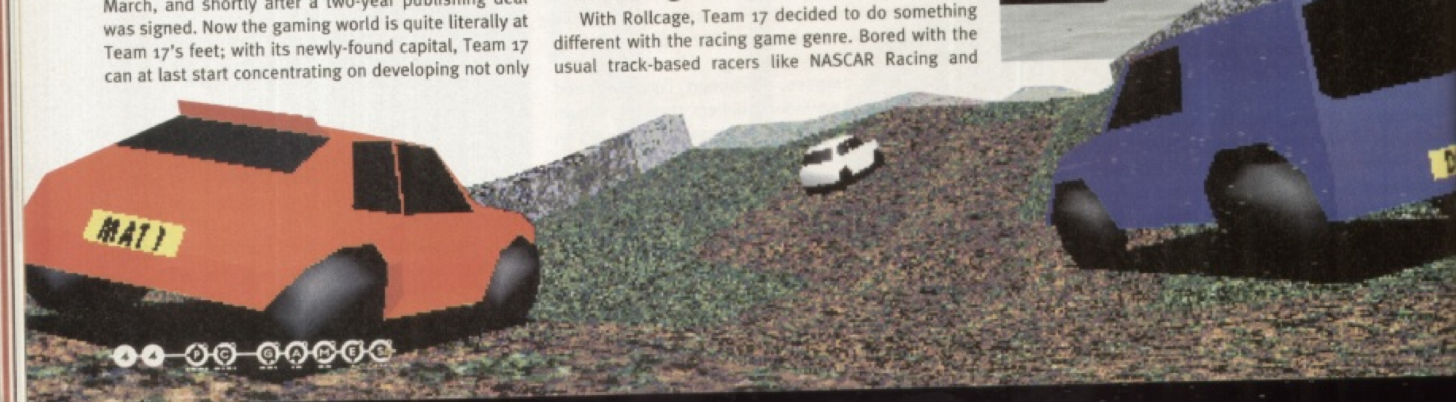
With Rollcage, Team 17 decided to do something different with the racing game genre. Bored with the usual track-based racers like NASCAR Racing and

(Above) As you can see, Rollcage's anti-aliased, texture-mapped graphics are quite simply awesome. Imagine this level of detail running at 70 frames a second on a Pentium. Sounds good, eh?

(Below) One of the game's many tracks is set in the LA sewer channels, racing along the concrete course, Terminator 2-style.

(Bottom) When it's released in September, Rollcage will feature a smart multi-player network option in which up to six drivers can take part simultaneously. A nice touch is the ability to add your own personalised number plates.





ificent 17

indeed Namco's Ridge Racer, Team 17 eventually opted for an off-road racing game in which cars bang, bash and battle across a variety of different courses including canyon circuits, forest stages and even multi-storey car parks!

Developed by brothers Mat and Dan Cook (who are Rollcage's programmer and graphic artist respectively), the game's spectacular 3D engine was created completely from scratch which has taken around eight months so far. According to the Cook brothers, it is the most advanced 3D engine on the PC as yet, and has a number of unique features including fade-to-blue in the distance (to create a realistic horizon) and also full-perspective, anti-aliased texture-mapping. The result is quite literally awesome — Rollcage runs at an astounding 70 frames a second on a Pentium!

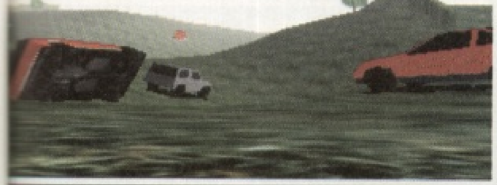
Featuring a smart combination of both Gouraud and depth shading, the game already looks very impressive even though it's still some way away from completion. In the final game up to six drivers will be able compete via a network option across a whopping 20 courses. In all there will be ten unique cars to choose between, each of which has been painstakingly created in 3D Studio and even has its own individual handling characteristics.

Including the usual array of exterior views and a choice between manual and automatic gearbox, Rollcage promises to surpass anything you've seen before. If you don't believe us, check it out for yourself — a playable Rollcage demo will be appearing exclusively on a future issue of PC GAMES. Look out for it!

● *Rollcage is due for release in September.*

(Below) Another one bites the dust in Rollcage.

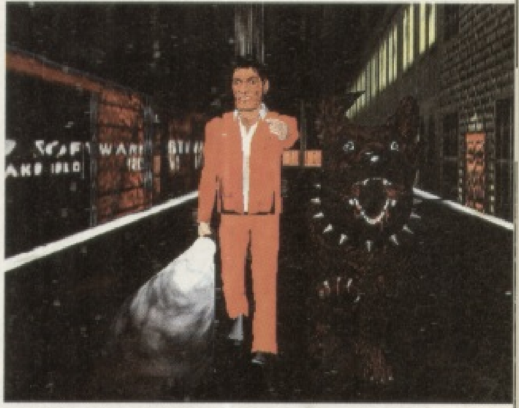
(Bottom) If you're looking for a playable Doom-clone but want a game with more engrossing gameplay, Allegiance could well be for you. It's hi-res graphics are second-to-none, and the puzzle-based gameplay promises to complement the gun-toting action perfectly.



Allegiance

Although Allegiance's slick first-person perspective graphics make it look visually similar to Doom, Team 17 are adamant it will be vastly different to id Software's classic shooter. For a start Allegiance won't simply be a mindless gore-fest, and each of the 10 missions will be properly structured with the emphasis on completing the tasks in hand thoroughly and correctly.

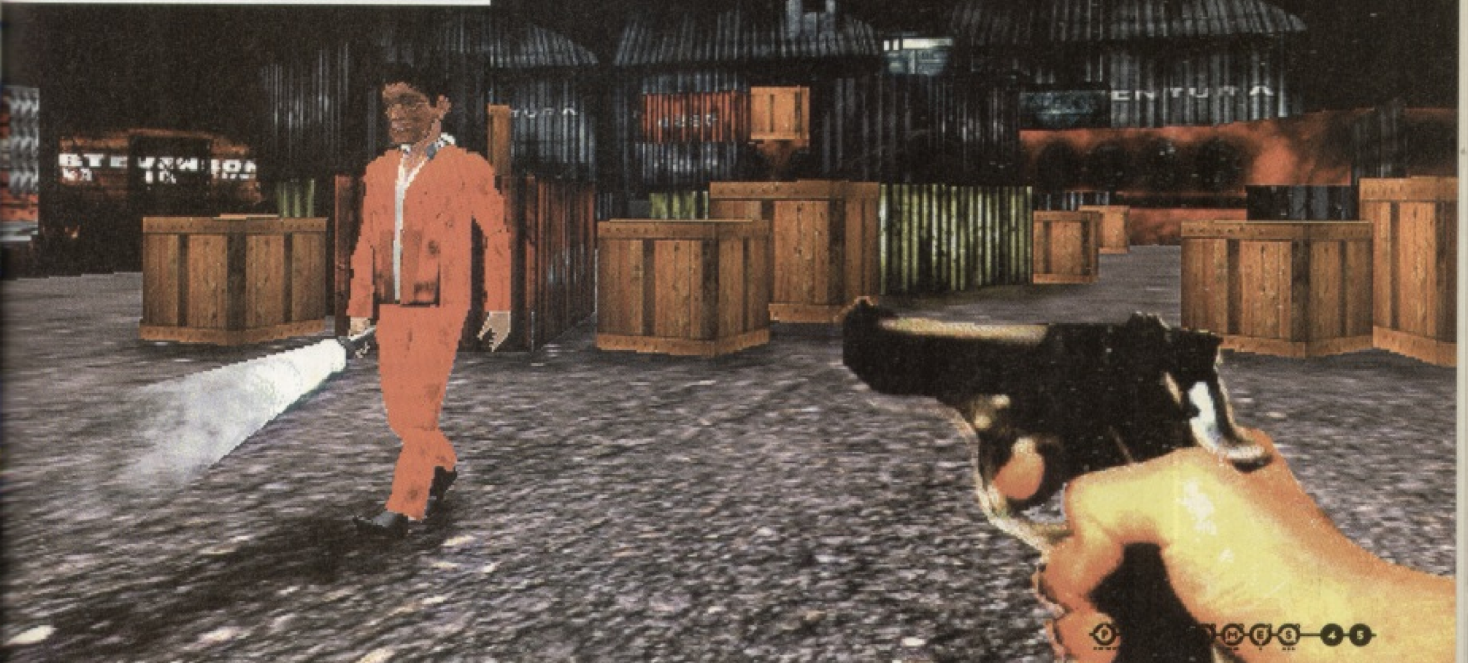
Incorporating Team 17's advanced video playback system that runs almost TV-quality footage without the aid of an MPEG card, the action will be interspersed with dramatic live-action sequences to increase the atmosphere. The scenes will be incredibly realistic (or should that be gory?), with buckets of blood and guts flying all over the place. In fact, Allegiance will be so violent that Team 17 is already confidently expecting a 15 certificate when it's eventually released!

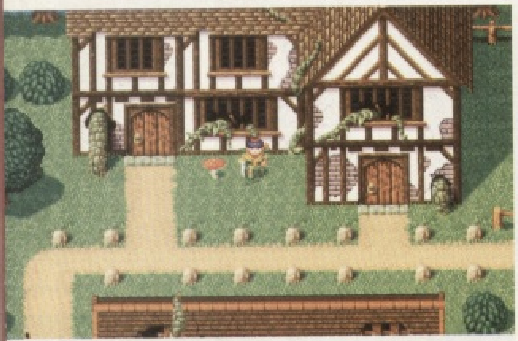


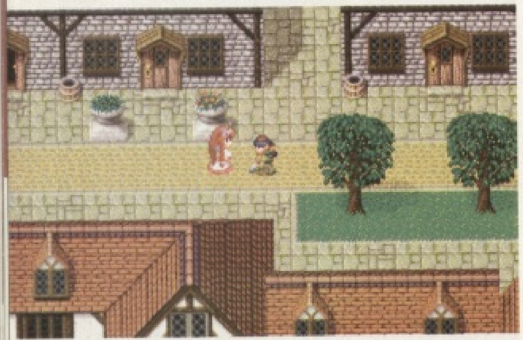
In addition, Allegiance will even feature an impressive (but processor-hungry) SVGA mode, along with a massive selection of weapons to collect and some 50 types of enemy to eliminate.

If you liked Doom but wanted something a bit more intellectually taxing, Allegiance could well be what you're looking for.

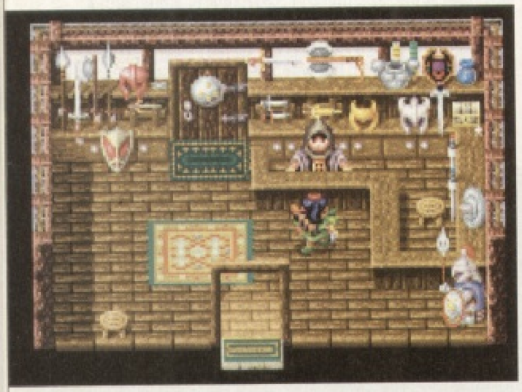
● *Allegiance is due for release in Sping '96.*

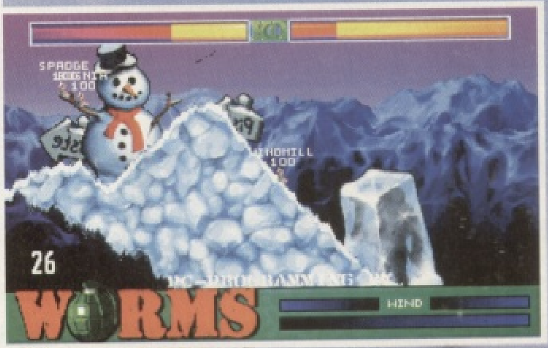




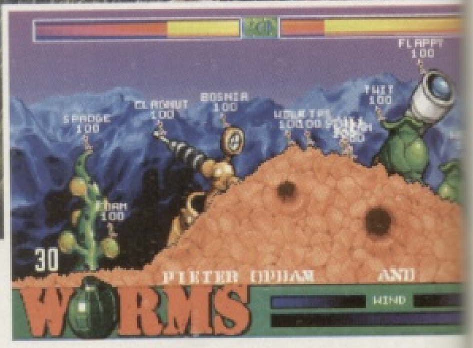


(Top) Witchwood is an absolutely enormous game, featuring over a thousand locations spread across various different landscapes.
(Above) The game's excellent artificial intelligence engine makes talking to other characters much easier and less time consuming.
(Below) If Pip manages to save up enough cash, he can go and buy a new weapon from the armoury.





(Left) Compared to the Amiga game's relatively simple graphics, the PC version's presentation is a vast improvement. A zoom option has also been included, giving gamers the chance to view the battlefield as a whole.



Witchwood

For those of you who own a Super Nintendo I'm sure Witchwood will look vaguely familiar. It is, without a shadow of a doubt, a Zelda clone — an arcade adventure complete with cutesy graphics and absorbing gameplay.

Set in some distant, mystical realm, the storyline goes something like this: There once lived an evil witch who terrorised the entire land. Eventually the villagers plucked up the courage to storm her mountain lair, transforming her into a block of wood using a powerful magic shield. All was well... until now. Over the years the old hag has grown, spreading her roots across the land and now she's about to wreak havoc once more.

Okay, so the story may not be particularly inspiring, but the gameplay certainly is. As Pip, the hero of the adventure, the player has to explore the world in search of the four pieces of the shield with which to defeat the evil bitch-queen once again. This isn't as easy as it sounds, because the land in which the game is set is absolutely enormous. In fact, there are over a thousand locations in all, and Pip's quest will take him through haunted graveyards, across treacherous mountain ranges and even down into hellish underground caverns plagued by fireball-spitting demons!

Witchwood is being developed by Synergy, a two-man team, and it has grown in size tremendously since its initial conception. Originally the central town was going to comprise of just a few dozen houses but now, a year later, it contains about two to three hundred rooms, every one of which can be explored! Usually a game area of this size would mean constantly retracing your steps to return to places you've already visited, but thanks to strategically-placed teleport points this tedious back-tracking is kept to a bare minimum.

Pointless conversations are another problem the team wanted to overcome, so rather than asking the same questions to different characters time and time again, the game automatically remembers previous conversations and adjusts the dialogue lines accordingly. You won't be able to talk your way out of everything though, so expect more than a little swordplay throughout the adventure.

Appearing on CD, Witchwood will feature full digitised speech, as well as dramatic cutscenes that help explain the non-linear storyline throughout the game.

● *Witchwood is due for release in September.*

Worms

By now you've probably heard of Worms. It's the game that Team 17, along with most of the specialist computer press, are hailing as the most playable game of 1995. It's a justified claim too, because after just a few minutes playing Worms I guarantee you'll be hooked for life.

Why? The answer is simple: like most of Team 17's products, the emphasis is on addictive gameplay. Controlling a group of four worms armed with a variety

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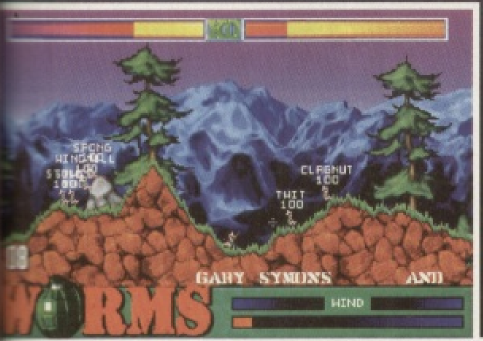
(Left) This rendered worm is just one of many featured in the hilarious intro and cutscene sequences. Come on — just how hard is your worm?

(Below) Team 17 is billing Worms as 'the most playable game of 1995' and, to be honest, they could well be right. It's a surprisingly simple concept, but like most other multi-player games it's incredibly addictive. What's more, the game includes some 4 billion levels, so don't expect to tire of this baby easily.



of weapons, the aim of this two-to-sixteen player game is simply to nuke the enemy in any way you see fit. Blast 'em with bazookas, shoot 'em with shotguns... hell, you can even wipe the slimy buggers from existence using high-explosive sheep!

Worms has been around in one form or another for about four years, when programmer Andy Davidson first came up with the idea while working in a computer store in Bournemouth. It was only when he approached Team 17 with the game just nine months ago that Worm fever began, and now with the backing of Ocean it seems that Worms will appear on just about every format you could possibly imagine.

The PC version of Worms is almost complete (although it's not due for release until late 1995) and will feature radically enhanced graphics and sound, along with some four billion randomly-generated levels to battle over, ranging from forest stages to ice plains to zany Mars levels. Each level has a specific code too, so if you do find one that's particularly good, you can simply make a note of the number to return to it over and over again.

Along with the improved in-game graphics, Team 17 are currently working on numerous rendered intro and cutscene sequences. Played after spectacular kills and such like, their cartoon style works extremely well, especially in a game as light-hearted and indeed as funny as Worms.

Set to become one of '95s most sought-after titles, Worms isn't a game to be taken too seriously, but it's most definitely one to look out for.

● *Worms is due for release in October.*

'Pinball Game'

Although details are sketchy at the moment, PC GAMES can exclusively reveal that Team 17 are working on a pinball game. As yet untitled, Team 17's pinny game will, like Epic Pinball, use the full potential of the computer medium and will feature a wide selection of original tables. Additionally, Team 17 are hoping to sign up a coin-op manufacturer, thus enabling them to bring real-life pinball tables to the PC.

Although the 'pinball game' is not due for release until the end of this year or possibly the beginning of next, we'll endeavour to bring you more details as and when we get them.

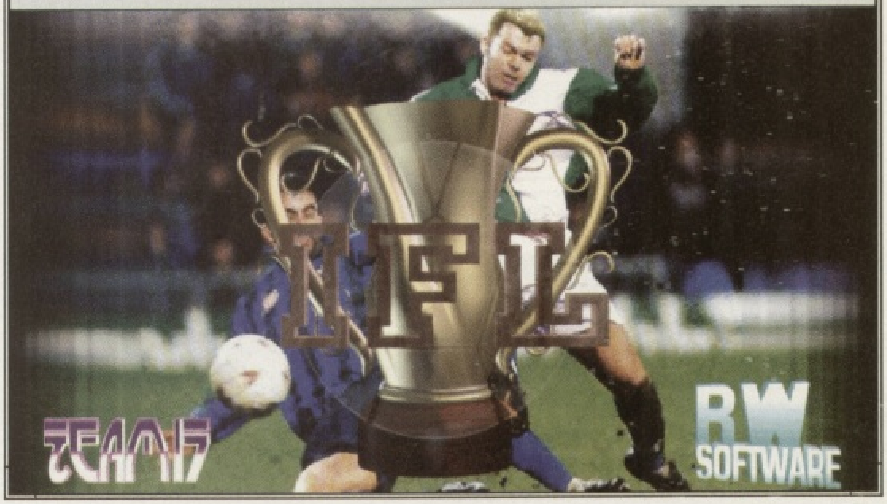
IFL

Interactive Football League, or IFL for short, is Team 17's unique on-line football management game. Rather than playing against computer-controlled opponents, IFL's most unique feature is that you get to compete against real people over the Internet.

Based loosely on play-by-mail games (in which players post their turn/actions to a central referee), you get to pick your own team using your initial pool of cash, then gradually take them to the top by winning matches and so on. The system works in very much the same way as the real football league, in that each team gets to play every other in the division twice in a 22-game season, and that points are awarded for each win, either at home or away.

The on-line version of the game allows managers to send their tactics via a Modem or over the Net, the results are then calculated by Team 17 and finally posted back to the players. What's more the winner of the conference receives a tasty 500 quid, while winners of any cup matches get a respectable fifty pound note in return for their skills.

Each season last approximately five and a half months, and costs just £20. The game starts on July 1st, and if you're interested and after more information contact Team 17 on (01924) 267776. A disk version will also be available, where turns are sent via the post rather than over the Net, and the starting cost is £30 (which includes postage for the whole season).



A LITTLE HELP GOES A LONG WAY

HELP!
Sensible Soccer
European Champions
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Pushover
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reviews

At last, Star Trek: TNG is finally here and it's awesome! But wait — Don't forget the bundles of other reviews we've crammed into this scorching summer issue. Read on...

Reviewed On CD

Chaos Control	Infogrames	64
Combat Air Patrol	Psygnosis	68
Frontier: First Encounters	GameTek	72
Jagged Alliance	Mindscape	76
Loadstar	BMG	58
Machievelli The Prince	MicroProse	60
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Ravenloft: Stone Prophet	SSI	70
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Zig-Zag	QQP	75

Reviewed On Disk

HardBall 4	Warner Int.	75
Magic Carpet: Hidden Worlds	Bullfrog	54

HOW WE DO WHAT WE DO...

Everyone at PC GAMES is a complete gaming nut. That's why we know exactly what you want to see in a game review (or so we like to think).
So what do you get?

Well, you get all the info you need and no waffling — we get straight to the point. On top of that you get loads of big screenshots of the game in action, along with maps and diagrams helpfully illustrating any major gameplay features — after all a picture, as they say, speaks a thousand words.

Then we compare the big games with another of similar type in the 'It's A Bit Like...' panel. Typically this will be the best game in its genre so you'll probably be pretty familiar with it, thus giving you a handy point of reference.

The whole PC GAMES team plays every game reviewed and, although only one person's name appears on each review, the criticisms and Overall mark reflect all of our combined opinions, hopefully giving you a balanced view. Should any team member disagree violently with the rest, his comments will appear in a special box in the review.

Finally, we have the essential score panel...

All the guff you need to know about who publishes the game, who developed it, its price and when it's due to be released. You even get a contact 'phone number to call if you want more info.

Details the minimum machine specification as recommended by the software company, along with how much valuable hard disk space it takes up and what optional peripherals it'll recognise.

The game's good and bad points, which are basically a concise summary of the criticisms made in the main review.

The Overall Score. We don't see any point in ratings for playability and all that other stuff — you get one mark to sum everything up and that's it.

The coveted PC GAMES STAR is awarded to any game scoring 90% or over, indicating that the game in question is an essential addition to any gamesplayer's software collection.

WING COMMANDER 3^{CD}

ELECTRONIC ARTS/ORIGIN

(0753) 549442

£54.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

50MHz 486, VGA, 8Mb RAM, 20Mb of hard disk space, double-speed CD-ROM drive and joystick.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Mouse; SVGA; almost every major soundcard.

*THE **GOOD...***

- At last — an 'interactive movie' that actually looks like a movie.
- The dogfighting is tense, exciting and looks fabulous.
- Intriguing plot that keep you hooked from the start.
- Superb SVGA graphics and excellent sound.

*...AND THE **BAD***

- Needs a monster PC to run at anything near a playable speed.
- The missions lack depth and variety.

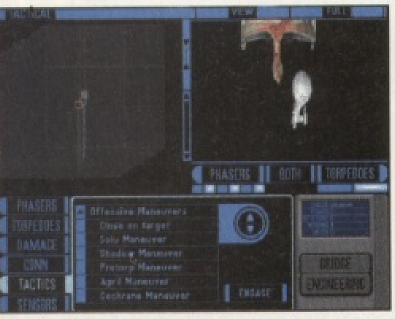
Overall

92%

PC GAMES STAR

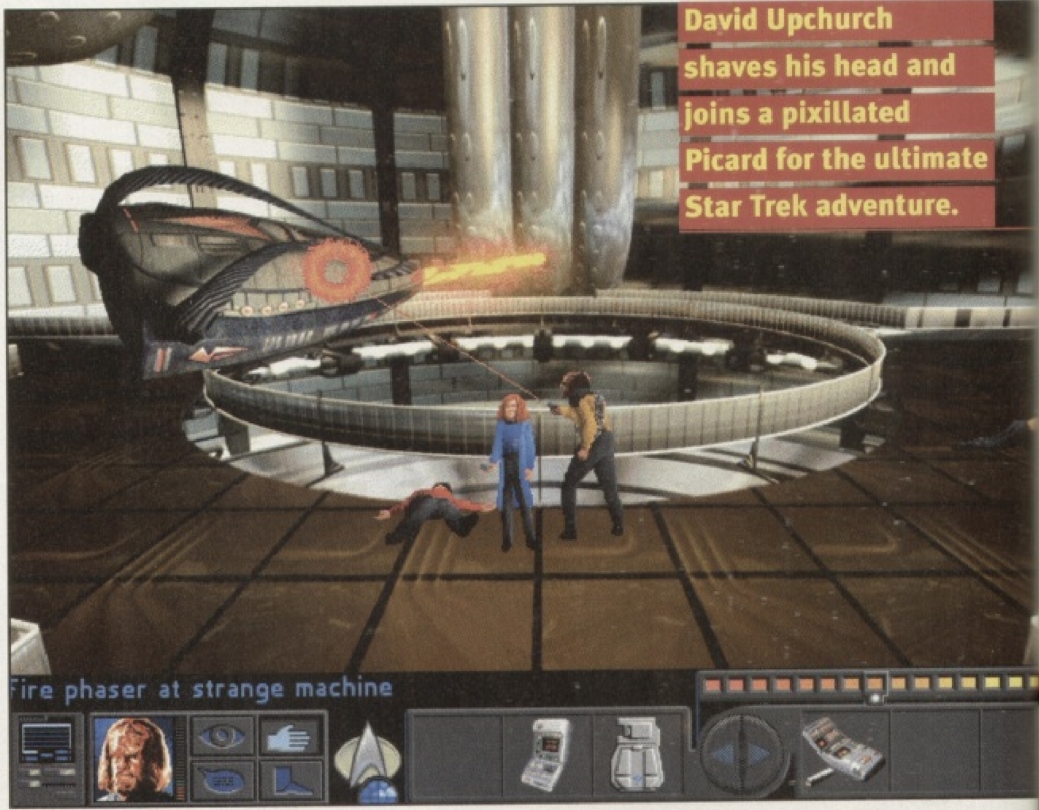
STAR

David Upchurch shaves his head and joins a pixillated Picard for the ultimate Star Trek adventure.



The ship-to-ship combat is ST:TNG's only real weakness. It's not bad as such, just a bit dull and unexciting. Hopefully this will be improved for ST:TNG 2.

A Garidian warbird decloaks behind a tiny scoutship — just one tiny example of the dozens of excellent cutscenes that punctuate ST:TNG. One day, all games will look this good...



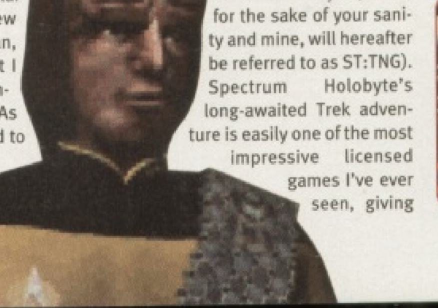
Solving the puzzles is all about using the right people in the right places. You can cycle through the crew in your away team and get them to inspect or use the objects they find — they'll each give you a different response depending on their abilities.

As I begin to write this review, I can feel a cold trickle of sweat start to run down my back. My fingers tremble as they punch the PC's keyboard, my heart is racing fit to bust and my bowels are doing nauseous somersaults. I don't feel at all well — and I've still got some 2000 words or so to go.

Why I am I such a state? Because I'm writing about Star Trek — and, as any journalist will tell you, writing about Star Trek is dangerous. In fact, by the time you read this, I may well be dead, murdered by a lynch mob of enraged Trekkers who have declared a Salman Rushdie-style *fatwa* on me.

Please, let me get one thing straight from the start — I *like* Star Trek, honest, and furthermore I *really* like Star Trek: The Next Generation (although, if you ask me, Deep Space Nine should've stayed in deep space). In fact, I think some episodes of Star Trek: TNG (especially The Best Of Both Worlds two-parter, in which Picard gets turned into a Borg) are the best science fiction I've ever seen on TV.

What I *don't* like about Star Trek and its subsequent offspring are the obsessive fanatics it seems to attract, those sad, wide-eyed individuals who fervently and vociferously believe that Gene Roddenberry didn't so much create a popular TV show as a template for a new 20th Century religion. I mean, I'm a huge Star Wars fan, but I don't go around trying to convert people to the Force. As William Shatner allegedly said to a group of Trekkers at a Star Trek conference: GET A LIFE!

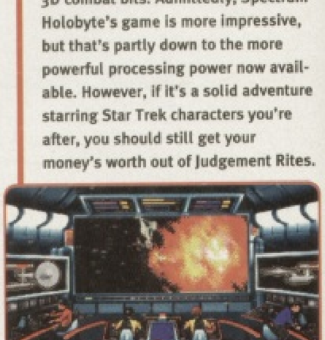


Oh, why do I bother? Nothing I say here will change the views or lifestyles of these people. Indeed, I'll bet money now that once this review appears in print we'll get scores of complaint letters (in addition to the death threats) from Trekkers, bitching about some minor technical inaccuracy I've made regarding the tachyon levels in the Enterprise's warp drives.

However, I challenge even the most anally-retentive Trekker to find fault with Star Trek: The Next Generation — "A Final Unity" (which, for the sake of your sanity and mine, will hereafter be referred to as ST:TNG). Spectrum Holobyte's long-awaited Trek adventure is easily one of the most impressive licensed games I've ever seen, giving

It's a bit like...

...Star Trek: Judgment Rites. When Interplay came to do its interpretation of the Star Trek legend it too opted for a graphic adventure punctuated with 3D combat bits. Admittedly, Spectrum Holobyte's game is more impressive, but that's partly down to the more powerful processing power now available. However, if it's a solid adventure starring Star Trek characters you're after, you should still get your money's worth out of Judgement Rites.



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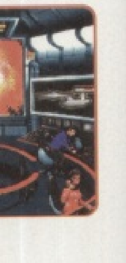


R TREK

The Next Generation

"A Final Unity" CD

even LucasArts' brilliant Star Wars spin-offs a good run for their money.

The game commences with a beautifully-produced animated introduction sequence, which perfectly emulates the cliff-hanger openings of the TV episodes. It begins with the Enterprise on a routine patrol of Federation Space near the Romulan neutral zone. Suddenly a badly-damaged Garidian scoutship is detected fleeing Romulan Space. The Garidians are one of the Romulans few allies and are rarely encountered, so naturally the ever-curious Picard decides to investigate (well, it'd be a pretty dull game if he just decided to ignore it, wouldn't it?).

As the Enterprise approaches it's hailed by the scoutship's crew, who claim they seek political asylum from their Garidian persecutors. Right on cue (great sense of dramatic timing, these aliens) a massive Garidian Warbird decloaks behind the tiny scoutship, locks onto it with a tractor beam and begins hauling it aboard. On the Enterprise the red alert siren starts blaring, the camera slowly closes in on a clench-jawed Picard, the music builds to a crescendo, you wet yourself, and then the TV show's title sequence rolls, proper theme tune and all.

It's a hell of a start to a game, that's for sure. The quality of the rendered images is simply superb (although Picard, Ryker, Data et al do look a little 'plasticine'-y) and the use of music and effects is excellent. It's all capped off by the superb speech, which employs the vocal talents of the TV show's entire cast. Indeed, close your eyes and it's hard not to imagine that there's a real TV episode being played out on your humble PC. Believe me, Trekkers will just love it.

And the best thing of all is that this level of quality is maintained throughout the whole game. If I have any complaint at all it's that in some of the conversations there are times when the inflection on the lines sounds a little off (presumably because the actors recorded their parts in isolation, and therefore they weren't reacting to somebody else) but such moments are few and far between, and to be honest I'm just nit-picking now.

But enough about the stunning audio-visuals, what of the game? Well, as I mentioned earlier, it's essentially a

Take Me To The Bridge Or: Who's Who On The Enterprise

Commander William Ryker

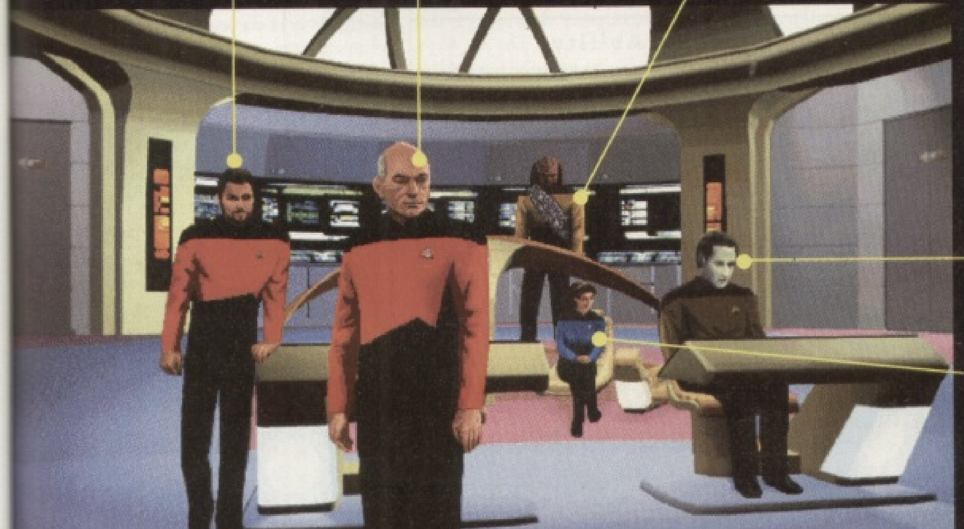
If there's an ugly alien that needs punchin' or a buxom woman that needs kissin', you can bet Ryker will be in there first, fists a-flailing and lips a-puckering. He's a bit of a creep, actually.

Captain Jean-Luc Picard

The Enterprise's head-honcho — which probably explains why he's called Captain and not somebody else. He's a bit of an all-round excellent bloke, is our Picard — except for the fact that he's French.

Lt Cmdr Worf

If there's a fight — and Ryker's otherwise occupied — then you can bet it'll be Worf in there flexing his muscles. Tends to go on about 'honour' a lot, so he probably wouldn't vote Tory.



...And, Er, What About The Rest Of The Crew?

Lt Cmdr Geordi La Forge

Geordi's a nice enough bloke, but he seems to have no interests beyond the Enterprise's internal workings. He really ought to get out a bit more.

Doctor Beverly Crusher

The female characters in Star Trek always tend to be a bit weak, and Dr Crusher's no exception. Her biggest claim to fame is that she once snogged Picard — whoop!

Lt Cmdr Data

Data is an 'artificial lifeform', which basically means he speaks like Mr Logic from Viz and has no sense of humour. We suspect that he was based on a Trekker that Gene Roddenberry once met.

Counsellor Deanna Troi

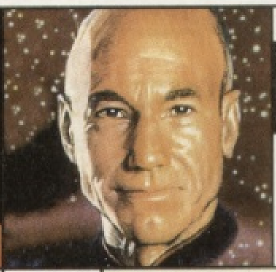
A complete wet blanket — she's forever furrowing her brow and moaning "I sense so much... *pain* ." Arguably the most useless member of the crew, but looks good in a one-piece uniform.

Clash Of The Captains

In the movie Star Trek: Generations, the two famous Captains of the Enterprise, James T. Kirk and Jean-Luc Picard, met for the first time. Sadly, however, the movie failed to resolve the biggest and most important question in the Trek universe, namely: who's best?

But now, for the first time, PC GAMES reveals all. We've made a list of the special qualities that we believe separate the Captains from the First Officers, and rated each of the contenders out of 10. So, just who is best — Kirk or Picard? Read on to find out...

Captain James T. Kirk



Captain Jean-Luc Picard

Captain James T. Kirk			Captain Jean-Luc Picard
Air Of Authority: Back in the original Trek TV series, Kirk always seemed a bit too young and cocky to be at the helm of a Federation starship. More recently, Kirk's advancing years have earned him a natural gravitas, but it's been undermined by his ever-expanding waistline.	5	9	**Air Of Authority:** Pretty much excellent, actually. Picard looks old enough to have been around the galaxy a few times, but not so old that he needs help getting on and off the transporter pad. What's more, his rich, deep voice helps enormously. Shame about the lack of hair, though.
Grace Under Fire: Oh, very good indeed — Kirk never buckled under pressure. Whenever threatened by an alien with a funny-shaped raygun, he was always ready with a snappy put-down and one of his incredibly patronising smirks. When you think about it, it's amazing he was never shot.	8	10	**Grace Under Fire:** Almost flawless, and a definite credit to Starfleet. Picard's been put through the wringer more times that I've had pints of Romulan ale, and he always comes out smiling — well, not *exactly* smiling, but you get my drift.
Fighting & Rucking: Wahay, go on my son! Even in his early years, Kirk was never one to shy away from a fight, even if it did mess up his hair a bit. And in Star Trek: Generations he was still indulging in fisticuffs, although at his age he really ought to take it a little bit easier.	8	5	**Fighting & Rucking:** Disappointing — frankly, if you were in Ten-Forward and some drunken Klingons started calling you names, Picard is the last bloke you'd want by your side. Picard's not really one for rough-housing it, and tends to leave the physical stuff to Commander Ryker.
Luck With The Ladies: If Kirk wasn't punching aliens, he was snogging them. You could always bet that, on any mission, there would be some stupid alien tart who would ask "What is love, Captain?" And sure enough, Kirk would show them — with tongues. What a guy.	10	1	**Luck With The Ladies:** A-bloody-bysmal! As with fighting, Picard tends to leave the snogging to Ryker. To my knowledge the only girl Picard has ever 'got off' with is Doctor Beverly Crusher, so not only is his luck with the ladies poor, he's also got terrible taste.
Abundance Of Hair: Not as good as it first appears. Apparently Kirk's a bit of ruglover, but it looks okay so we'll let him off. At least, like us, he appreciates that men in positions of responsibility should have at least some hair — unlike *some* people we could care to mention!	5	1	**Abundance Of Hair:** Well, it's obviously not very good, is it? Mind you, at least Picard carries it well, and doesn't ill-advisedly try to conceal his gleaming pate with a few pathetic strands of hair dragged across from one ear to t'other. Some even say he follicle-free head is part of his charm - personally I'm not so sure.
Acting Ability: In the original Trek TV series, Kirk always seemed a bit too Ah, this is where it all starts to go a bit pear-shaped. Let's face it, William Shatner was never a potential Oscar winner. His main way of conveying drama... was... to speak... slowly... andthenspeedupbriefly... andthento... slow... down... again.	3	10	**Acting Ability:** Undeniably excellent. Patrick Stewart is an experienced thespian with a string of top dramatic roles on both stage and screen to his credit. Compared to Kirk, he certainly brings a bit of class to the bridge of the Enterprise.
Overall	39	36	***Overall***

The Verdict

Well, they always say that the old ones are the best, don't they — and that seems to have been proved correct here! Yes, old James T. Kirk wins the Clash Of The Captains — but it was a close run thing. If only Jean-Luc Picard had a bit more hair, things could've been so *very* different...

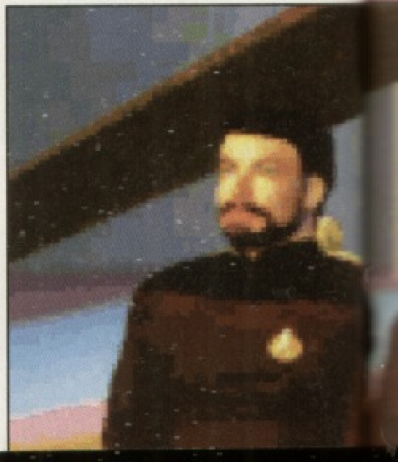
graphic adventure. The main thrust of the plot concerns a quest to find the 'Fifth Scroll', a semi-mystical artifact that (it's claimed) will free the persecuted Garidians from their masters. However, there are also scores of short 'mini-adventures' to participate in. Typically these are shoe-horned into the plot via 'urgent messages from StarFleet', and generally it's completely up to you whether you choose to accept them or not.

The adventuring consists of two main elements: onboard the Enterprise, and down on the planets. When you're on the Enterprise, flying around the galaxy, you assume the role of Captain Jean-Luc Picard himself. As the big cheese, you get to make all the key command decisions. From the bridge you can access all the ship's operations stations, such as communications, engineering, tactical, astrogation and so on, where you can fiddle with hundreds of knobs and buttons and generally dictate what everyone should do.

However, if the thought of controlling a whole Galaxy Class starship on your own sounds a touch daunting (and well it should — it's bloody complicated), don't panic; ST:TNG offers the player three difficulty levels, namely Ensign, Lieutenant and Admiral, which basically governs how much help you're given by the crew.

On the lowest difficulty level, Ensign, the crew will molly-coddle you, suggesting (typically correct) courses of action, selecting who should beam down to planets, and even picking out which tie you should wear that evening. Essentially this difficulty level removes all the 'onboard the Enterprise' complications from the game, leaving you free to get on with slightly more traditional graphic adventuring down on the planets (which I'll get on to in a moment).

Switch to the next difficulty level, Lieutenant, and things get slightly more complicated (never!). Now you actually have to ask the crew for help, choose who should beam down to planets and pick out your tie yourself. On the toughest difficulty level, Admiral, it's all down to you — ask the crew for advice and they'll simply shrug their shoulders and mutter "You're on you own here, baldy — and by the way, that tie doesn't go with that shirt".



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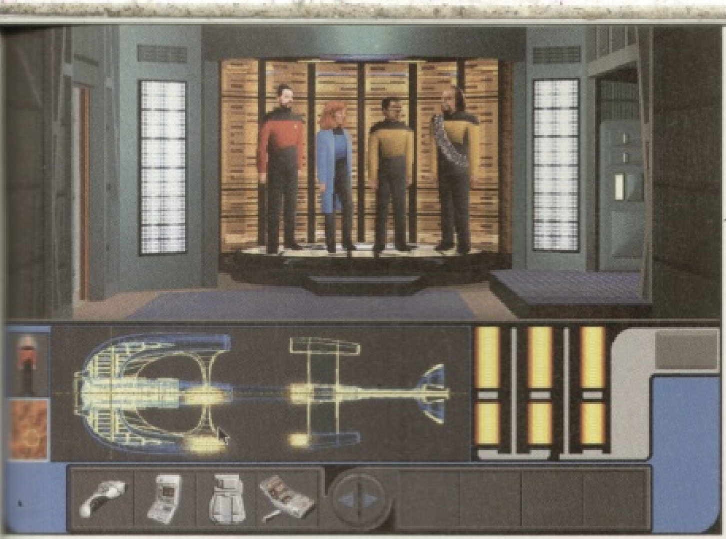
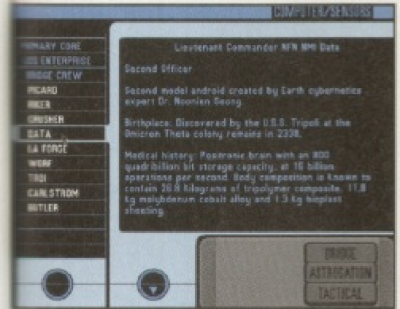

Depending on the difficulty level you've selected, the away team will either be picked for you or you'll be left to decide who should stay and who should go.

When Picard first encounters an alien race and says "On screen", you've got to admire him for not laughing or flinching at the sight of some the ugly-muglies sees.



Lieutenant Commander NFN NMI Data

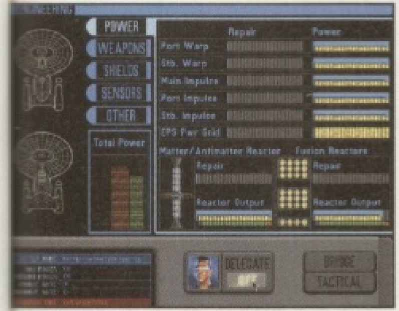
Second Officer

Second model android created by Earth cybernetics expert Dr. Noonien Soong.

Birthplace: Discovered by the U.S.S. Tripoli at the Omicron Theta colony remains in 2338.

Medical history: Positronic brain with an 800 quadribillion bit storage capacity, at 16 billion operations per second. Body composition is known to contain 26.8 kilograms of tripolymer composite, 11.8 kg molybdenum cobalt alloy and 1.3 kg bioplast sheeting.

From the ship's main computer you can access loads of Star Trek-related info and trivia. It's like being stuck with a boring Trek nut on a long train journey — *but in your very own home!*



If the thought of re-routing the plasma flux through the computer's power transducer all sounds a bit too much for you to handle, you can delegate Geordi to look after it.

(Below) The 3D crew models are surprisingly realistic and coupled with voices of each of the actors, it's almost as if you're watching an episode of the TV series.

To be honest, unless you're a real Trek-head and relish the thought of re-routing the plasma couplings through the main computer's energy transducer, you probably won't find the 'onboard the Enterprise' stuff *that* interesting, so advisable to stick to 'Ensign' or at least 'Lieutenant' difficulty level.

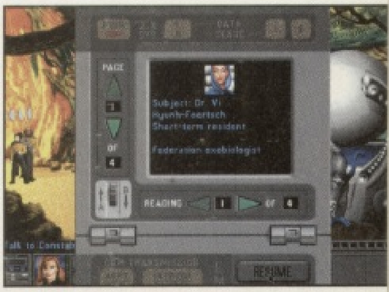
For non-Trekkers the most exciting thing that happens on the Enterprise is potentially the ship-to-ship combat but, frankly, I found it a bit of a non-event. It's not *bad* exactly, just slightly dull and uninvolving. Direct control over your ship is limited and ineffectual; instead, your best option is to do battle by selecting either offensive or defensive manouevres from a list of possible tactics, then letting loose with the phasers and photon torpedoes when you're in a good position.

Of course, I realise that this is Star Trek and not Star Wars, so it's unfair to expect fast-paced 3D action *a la* TIE Fighter or Wing Commander 3. However, there's no reason why it couldn't have been as tense and exciting as, say, the climactic battle in Star Trek II: The Wrath Of Khan. I don't want to make a big thing out of this because, as in the TV show, combat is a bit of a rarity; all I'm saying is that, when it happens, it would have been nice if it had been a bit better.

The other side to ST:TNG is the 'down on the planets' stuff. Unless you're playing on 'Ensign' difficulty, it's down to you to choose who should make up your away team and what equipment they should be carrying, based on your assessment of the situation. For example, if there's been a reactor leak on a space station, then it's probably a wise move to send down Geordi 'Cool shades' La Forge to examine the reactor and Doctor Crusher to deal with any possible casualties. You can have up to a maximum of four people in an away team, but you can 'swap' team members with others back on the ship as the situation demands.

Anyone who's played a graphic adventure will feel right at home on the away missions. There's the usual ultra-friendly point-'n'-click interface, lots of puzzles to solve and people to talk to. Success is largely a matter of using the right people in the right situations; for example, in the 'leaking reactor on a space station' scenario outlined earlier, it wouldn't be a good idea to make Geordi look after the casualties and Crusher inspect the damaged reactor.

All in all, ST:TNG is a superb game. The atmosphere generated by the stunning visuals and the exceptional speech is right off the scale, while the adventuring side of things is, as Spock would say, 'fascinating'. My only real disappointment lies with the ship-to-ship combat, but it's a minor thing that's more than compensated for by the sheer quality of every other aspect of the game. If you ever wondered what it would be like to take the helm of the Enterprise and "go where no-one has gone before", then here's the perfect opportunity to find out.



Subject: Dr. Vi Hyunh-Foertsch
Short-term resident

Federation exobiologist

The tricorder is one of your most essential pieces of equipment, allowing you to gather information on your location and the people you meet.

STAR TREK: TNG^CD

MICROPROSE/SPEC. HOLOBYTE

(01454) 326532

£49.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 486, SVGA, 8Mb RAM, 3Mb of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Sound Blaster soundcard.

THE GOOD...

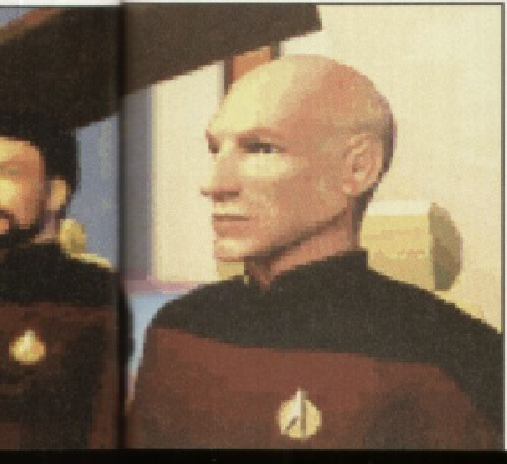
- As close to taking part in an actual ST:TNG episode as you're likely to get.
- The multitude of short sub-missions adds depth and longevity to the gameplay.
- The three difficulty levels make this perfect for adventurers of all abilities.

...AND THE BAD

- Don't even think about playing it unless you've got an above-par PC.
- The ship-to-ship combat is not as exciting as perhaps it should be.

Overall

91%



Dave Upchurch catches the rug bug again with Bullfrog's Magic Carpet data-disk.

Hidden Worlds

By now I'm sure you're all familiar with the original Magic Carpet. Bullfrog's stunning 3D blast-'em-up went down a storm with critics and punters alike thanks to its stunning use of texture mapping and Gouraud shading, amazing attention to detail and its adrenaline-inducing and highly-compulsive gameplay.

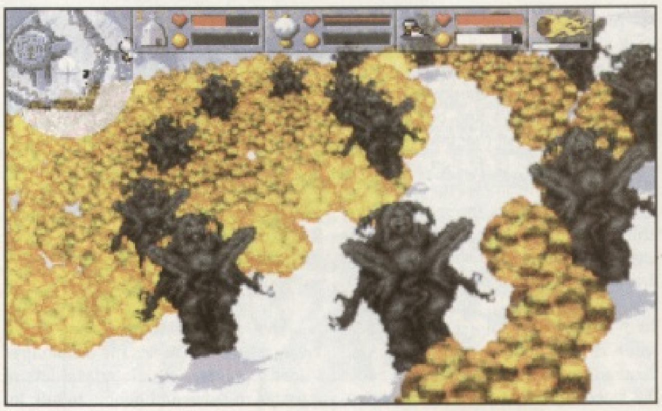
Of course, Bullfrog know you can't have too much of a good thing, so here's Hidden Worlds, a data-disk offering rug surfers a further 25 levels to do battle over. The aim of the game is unchanged: you ride around on a magic carpet, amass as much mana as possible (the source of all your mystical energy), collect an amazing assortment of death-dealing magical spells, blast the odd monster to bits, and generally do your best to avoid death.

The main differences between Magic Carpet and Hidden Worlds are cosmetic — Magic Carpet was set in an ancient Arabian Nights-style environment, whereas Hidden Worlds drops you into a barren, ice-covered landscape.

The other major difference is the difficulty level. Magic Carpet was no walk-over by any stretch of the imagination, but it's a teddy bear's picnic compared with Hidden Worlds. The enemy's onslaught is ruthless and relentless, and right from Level One there are rival wizards to defeat, all of whom do their damnedest to wipe you out (with notable success, more often than not).

Other than that, though, Hidden Worlds really is just more of the same. Disappointingly there are no new monsters to fight and only one new spell to collect — the homing meteor. Still, they say that if it ain't broke, don't fix it — and that seems to be the rule Bullfrog has stuck to here.

Be warned then; like the original, Hidden Worlds looks gorgeous, is fab to play and is as addictive as hell — just don't expect an easy ride or, indeed, any real surprises.



HIDDEN WORLDS

BULLFROG/IN-HOUSE

(01753) 549442

£19.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 486, VGA, 4Mb RAM, mouse and original Magic Carpet.

ALSO SUPPORTS

All the stuff Magic Carpet did!

THE GOOD...

- The graphics are just as gorgeous as they ever were.
- The same blood-pumpingly brilliant gameplay.
- A stiff challenge for all.

...AND THE BAD

- Some may find the challenge a little *too* stiff.

Overall

89%

"Hang on," mutters David Upchurch, "this is just the computer equivalent of Pairs..."

Tendo^CD^

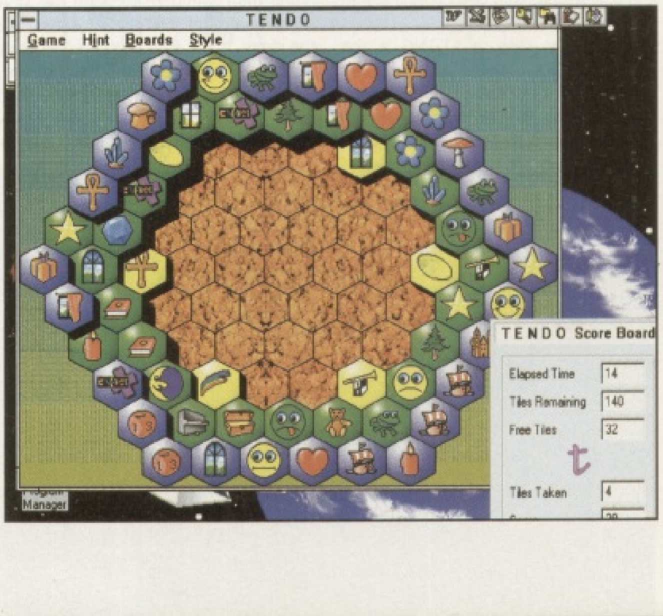
Tendo wins no prizes for originality. Essentially it's a Shanghai variant, which I'm sure you've played in one form or another. Basically you're presented with a board filled with patterned blocks, and the aim is to remove them as quickly as possible by matching up pieces. Pieces can only be paired if at least two of the adjoining sides are free. Tendo features 25 boards, a kids' version with bright colours, up to 144 pieces, two secret boards and a choice of shapes.

I'll admit that I've dwindled away many a happy hour playing Shanghai while I should have been doing Very Important Magazine Work, and so I found Tendo equally entertaining — but then, that was probably because (a) my review copy was free and (b) it sure beat the hell out of doing the magazine accounts or something (but so does watching paint dry, so that's not much of a recommendation).

Basically, Tendo is the perfect game to play if you're trying to idle away half-an-hour or so when the boss isn't looking. The problem is, the thought of actually going out and buying something like this with a view to an evening's enjoyment is preposterous. And having to pay nearly £30 in hard cash for it would be verging on the ridiculous!

To be honest, this isn't even a particularly good version — I was playing it on a Pentium and the screen update was still pretty slow. More annoying still was the fact that some blocks which, according to the rules, should have been accessible, er, weren't, for some reason. The score panel's a pain as well — it just gets in the way.

All in all, a fiver for this might be okay (but remember, I did say 'might'), but at £30 it's a right royal rip off. Forget it and save your cash for something more worthwhile.



TENDO Score Board

Elapsed Time 14

Tiles Remaining 140

Free Tiles 32

Tiles Taken 4

TENDO

DAZE/BLETCHLEY GROUP

(0171) 372 7435

£29.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 6Mb of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive, Windows 3.1 and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Any Windows-compatible soundcard.

THE GOOD...

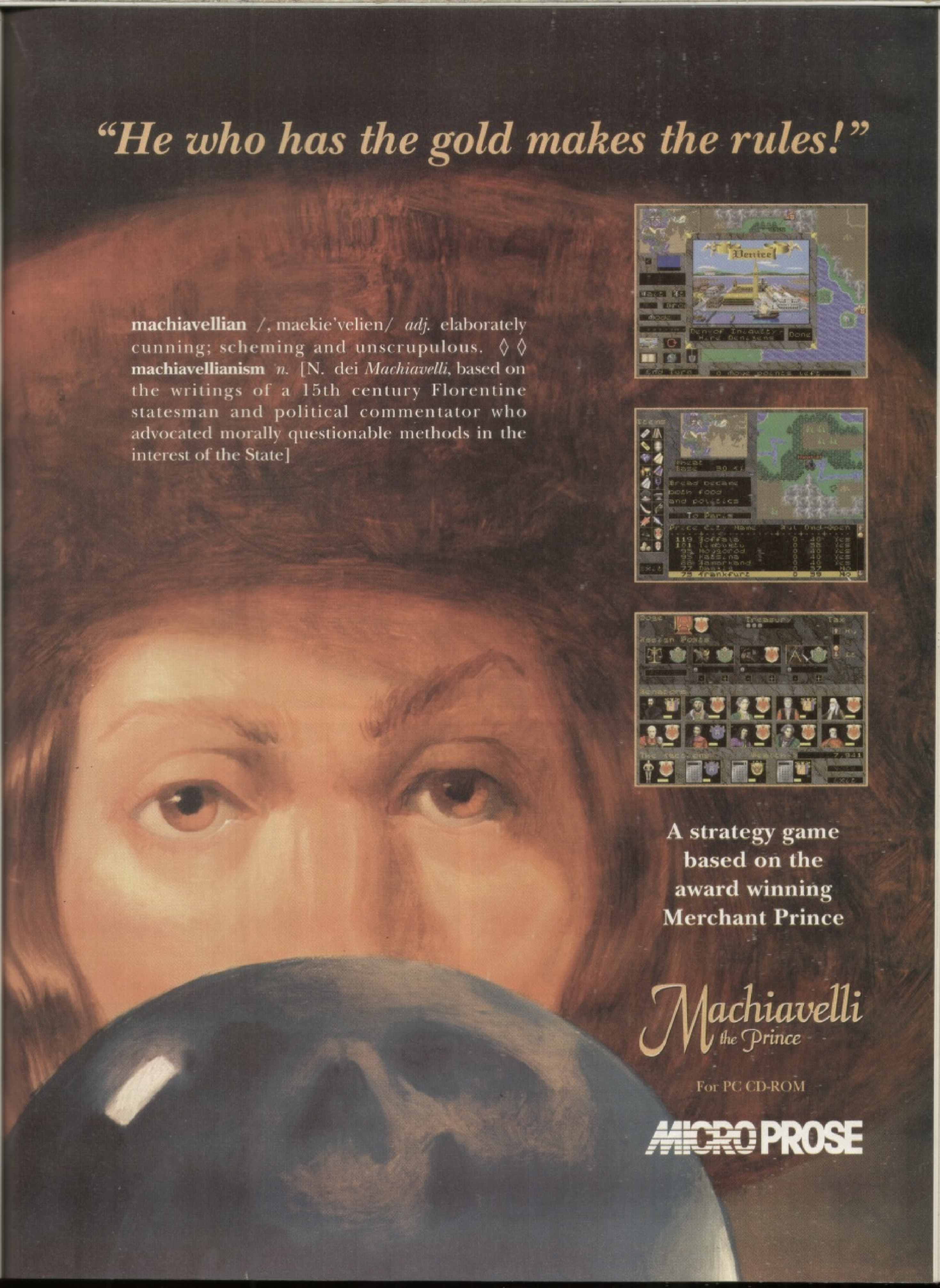
- Might give you a smidgen of enjoyment for... ooh, about ten minutes.

...AND THE BAD

- Thirty quid for this? You, my son, are 'avin' a laugh!
- Severely lacking in originality.
- Fails to improve on the age-old formula in any shape or form.

Overall

34%


"He who has the gold makes the rules!"
Venice
Done
End Turn
To Paris
Treasury
Tax

machiavellian /ˌmaekieˈvelien/ *adj.* elaborately cunning; scheming and unscrupulous. ◊ ◊ **machiavellianism** *n.* [N. dei *Machiavelli*, based on the writings of a 15th century Florentine statesman and political commentator who advocated morally questionable methods in the interest of the State]

A strategy game based on the award winning Merchant Prince

Machiavelli
the Prince

For PC CD-ROM

MICROPROSE

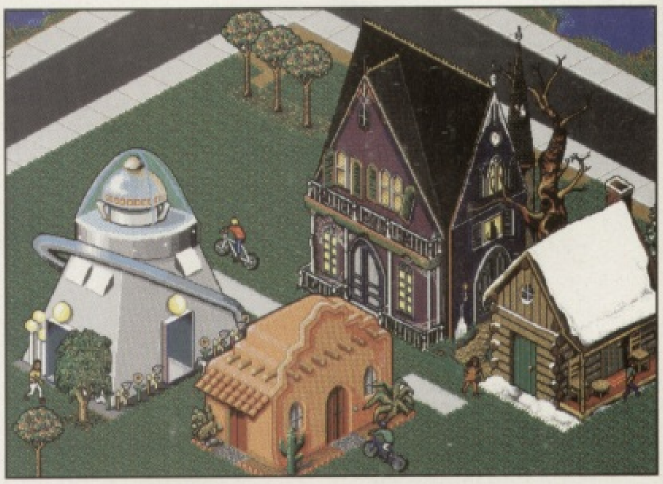
SimTown CD

David Upchurch joins the Sims in SimTown, as Maxis launch their new range of software for 'ver kidz'.

I sometimes wonder if there's anything left for Maxis to simulate. They've given us SimCity (plus a sequel and add-ons), SimAnt, SimFarm, SimLife, SimTower, A-Train, and even SimEarth. True, we haven't had SimHamlet, SimCornerShop or SimPaintDrying, but they're probably in development even now.

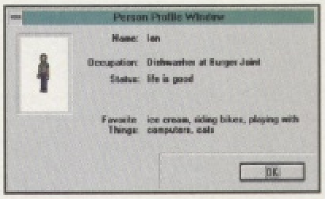
So what has SimTown got to offer? The answer is nothing much, for adults who like the kind of challenge found in SimCity 2000. The fact is though, this game is specifically targeted at `kids', and is reviewed and rated as such. On a practical level this means that the financial and planning challenges have been toned down, interaction with the Sims has been amplified, and you get lots of great terrain features, surreal buildings, and the chance to stick your nose into other people's lives.

Despite the switch in emphasis, the principles which lie behind all Maxis sims are found here, too. SimTown lets you create your own, personalised community by laying the roads, deciding where to put the buildings, providing businesses and civic support, and creating a green environment. There are three types of game to choose from: starting your own town from scratch, fixing an existing town's problems (such as drought, crop shortages and pollution), or building on a starter layout. This last category gives you templates based on roads, parks and cycle



(Right) The level of detail in SimTown is totally enchanting. Once you've got a decent-sized town up and running, it's entertaining just watching the little people going about their daily business. But can you keep them happy, that's the question...

(Below) SimTown lets you create your own characters, decide what they like to do, then follow them around as your community develops.

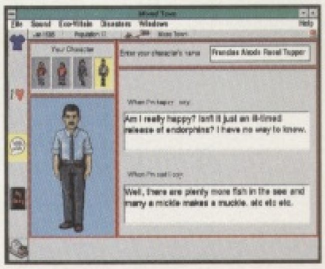

Person Profile Window
OK

Name: Ian

Occupation: Dishwasher at Burger Joint

Status: life is good

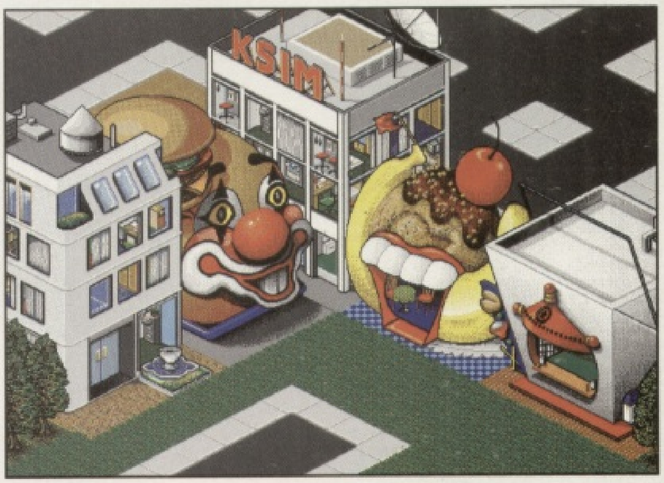
Favorite Things: ice cream, riding bikes, playing with computers, cats

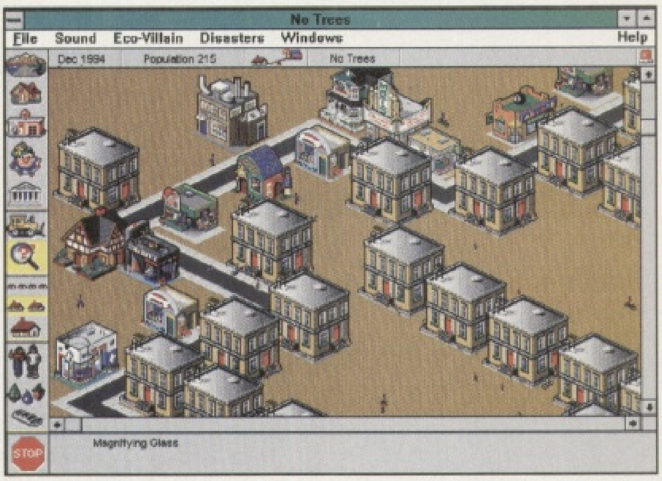

Mixed Town
File Sound Eco-Villain Disasters Windows Help
Your Character

Enter your character's name: Frandas Alexis Racel Topper

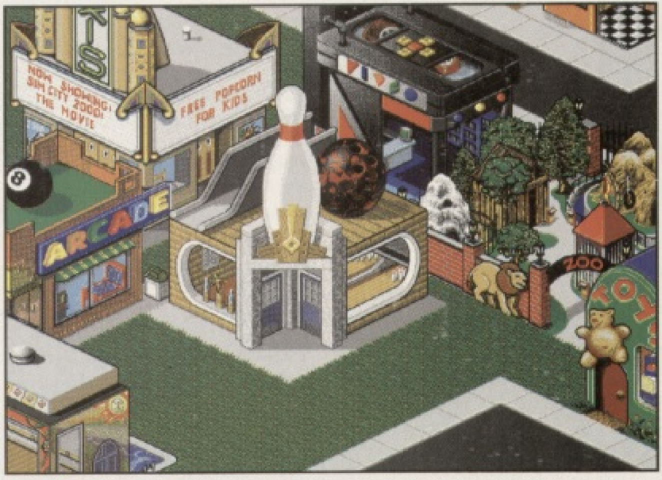
When I'm happy I say: Am I really happy? Isn't it just an ill-timed release of endorphins? I have no way to know.

When I'm sad I say: Well, there are plenty more fish in the sea and many a mickle makes a muckle. etc etc etc.




No Trees
File Sound Eco-Villain Disasters Windows Help
Dec 1994
Population 215
No Trees
Magnifying Glass
STOP

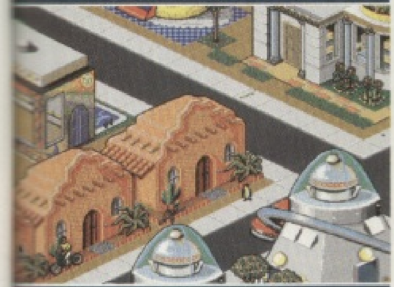
(Above) Once you've got the basic town design sorted out, you can start adding lots of attractive 'furniture' — such as trees, bushes and so on — all of which help keep your Sims happy.


NOW SHOWING! SIM CITY 2000! THE MOVIE
FREE POPCORN FOR KIDS
ARCADE
ZOO
TOYS

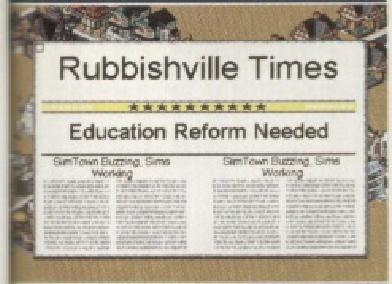
(Above) The variety of buildings and the freedom to place them where you like are just part of SimTown's charm. This freedom also reduces the difficulty of your decisions, but increases interaction with the Sims.

SimTown's
the Sims.

SimRubbishville



Welcome to Rubbishville, a town of tastelessly contrasting house styles, fun businesses, crazy restaurants and wacky topiary. The people are content, the sun is shining, the birds are chirping, and the town planners are tearing their hair out!



Rubbishville Times

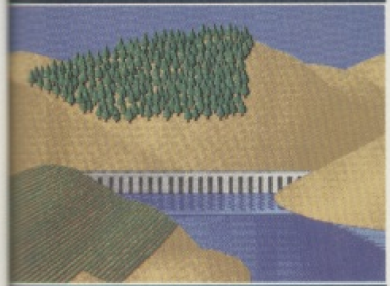
★★★★★★★★★★★★

Education Reform Needed

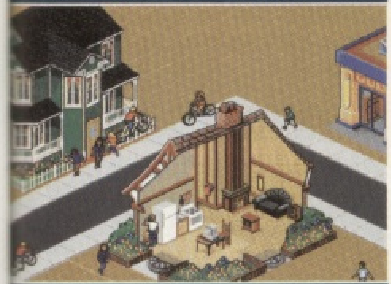
SimTown Buzzing, Sims Working

SimTown Buzzing, Sims Working

There are several ways to keep them happy. The first is by reading the local rag, which usually has a few words of sound planning advice. If Rubbishville needs more shops, houses, schools or greenery, you'll read it here first.



The natural resources screen helps you deal with environmental concerns such as trees, water supply, crop production, recycling initiatives and air pollution. Spend a few credits here and your Sims will show their gratitude.



The final way to find out just what it's like to live in Rubbishville is to ask the Sims themselves. Using the Investigate icon, you can click on individuals to hear what they think, or even examine on their houses to see what they're up to.

lanes, and allows you put your houses where you like.

As ever with Maxis sims, the main screen is simple. You get a panel of icons, some pull-down menus and a zoomable viewing window. The icons include a Terrain tool for placing roads, cycle paths, trees, grass, ponds and other special environmental decorations in your town. There's a Bulldozer for erasing mistakes, an Investigate tool which lets you interact with your Sims and look inside their houses, buttons which take you to an environmental control centre or a newspaper (both useful for helping you create your town), and a character designer.

The character designer sums up what SimTown is all about. It's like having your own pet person walking around inside your PC, giving you a level of interaction with individuals that none of the previous Sims has. You can design a girl, boy, woman or man, give them a name, choose the colour of their shirt, decide what they like to do and eat, determine what they say when they are happy or sad, and look at their diary entries. Once they've been created, you can locate your character and find out what's happening to them at any time.

SimTown also has a wide variety of building designs. Because of the game's target audience, you get a surreal selection which should appeal to adults as much as children. There are four kinds: houses (including log cabins, adobe houses, mobile homes, haunted houses, castles and futuristic dwellings), business centres (such as pizza and ice cream parlours, a TV station and a toy factory), fun places (a video arcade, a bowling alley and a zoo), and community buildings (hospitals, police and fire stations).

These don't just look pretty on the outside. Using the Investigate tool, you can click on a house and literally take the roof off to discover what the people inside are doing. Click on something inside the house and you might get a plant to move or a window to open. The same goes for other kinds of building: click on a see-saw outside a school and it moves, hit the cursor over the statue of a dog and it barks, while clicking on a fountain and it flows with water. You can have plenty of fun simply trying to discover all the animations.

Interacting with buildings is probably SimTown's most appealing feature, but you can also communicate with the local population. Click on someone riding a bike and they'll tell you how they feel, where they work and what their favourite things are. Apart from being interesting in itself, this provides info on how well you're running the town.

Life isn't as easy as it sounds for the populace. There are characters known as eco-villains lurking around, who steal trees, eat crops, drink the water, produce lots of rubbish and pollute the air. In addition there are three major catastrophes waiting to happen: drought, earthquake and fire. Considering the depth of imagination that has gone into the rest of the game, these disasters are disappointingly limited. It surely wouldn't have been too much effort to throw in a monster rampaging through the streets, an alien invasion, a tidal wave, or a swarm of killer African bees?

Apart from keeping people happy, there are other incentives for creating a successful settlement. First, there are awards for Small Town of the Year, Best Town in the State, Best Town in the Nation and Best Town in the World. More important than this, as anyone who's played SimCity 2000 knows, is the ability to save your towns and show them to your friends. If you're a complete obsessive you can even print out the design, get it framed and invent stories about the townsfolk. Or maybe not.

I've only got a couple of minor gripes, both of them with the control system. For one, the cursor works with a sizeable buffer, which means that you can end up laying stretches of road or trees in places you never intended to. The other problem occurs when you think you're clicking on a building but you get a character walking behind it instead. Both of these features can be very irritating.

Against this, the presentation is very good. There's excellent on-line help, with detailed hints and tips on every aspect of the game. There are also two difficulty levels to try, which basically affects the amount of damage your town suffers during to disasters and also the amount of cash you begin the game with. Above everything else though, the interface is helpfully and logically arranged. It's uncluttered, unfussy and very easy to understand.

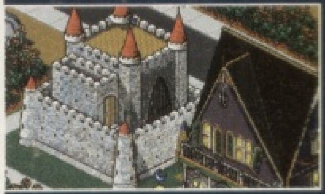
One more thing. SimTown is for kids and the mark reflects that. If you're old enough to handle and appreciate the subtleties of SimCity 2000 and you still want to try this, knock 10-15% off. It's fun at first for adults, but ultimately it's too easy to sustain any real long-term interest.

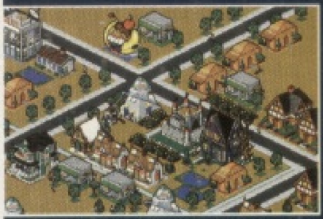
It's a bit like...

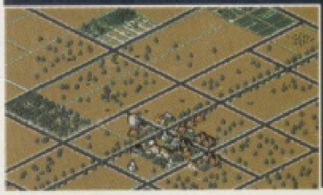
...SimCity 2000, but much simpler. An update of the original SimCity with far superior graphics, sound and gameplay, SimCity 2000 gives you an entire metropolis to run as you see fit. Just about everything is yours to control, from the infrastructure, through finances to futuristic community dwellings. A classic.

SimZoom

SimTown gives you three zoom modes. The closest lets you stick your nose into the Sims' business. The medium view is useful for arranging buildings in a particular area. The far view gives you an overall picture of your town's structure.







SIMTOWN^{CD}

MAXIS/IN-HOUSE
(0171) 490 2333
£34.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM **SPEC**

25MHz 486, SVGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive, 4Mb hard disk space, Windows 3.1 and mouse.

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

All Windows-compatible soundcards.

*THE **GOOD...***

- It's aimed at kids, so it's not overcomplicated.
- As with all Sim games, the attention to detail is incredible.
- The selection of buildings and terrain features is excellent.

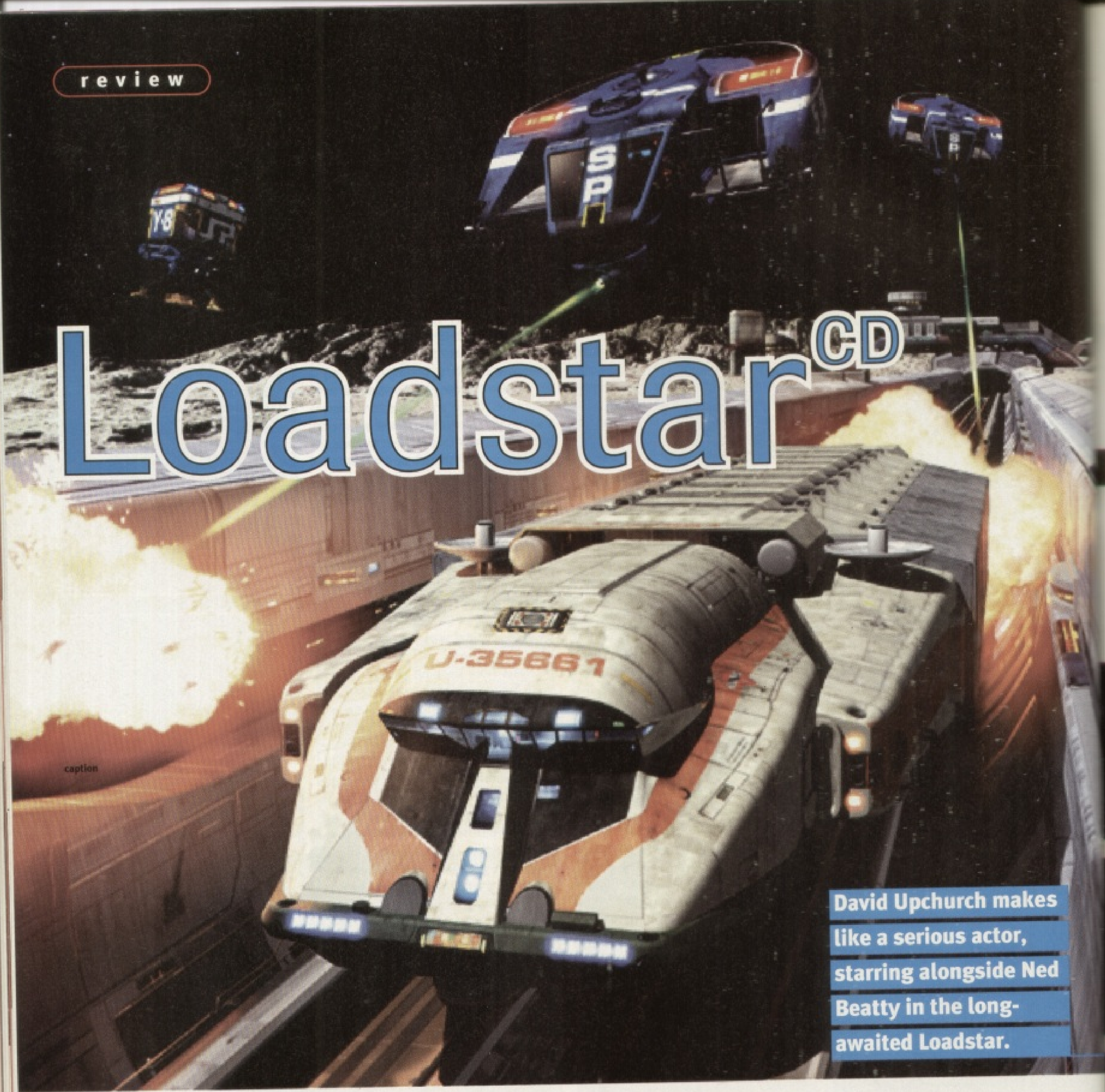
*...AND THE **BAD***

- Doesn't really offer much challenge for grown-ups.
- Large buffer occasionally makes controlling the game a bit awkward.

Overall

76%

Loadstar CD



caption

David Upchurch makes like a serious actor, starring alongside Ned Beatty in the long-awaited Loadstar.

You know, all this interactive multimedia films-as-games stuff seemed so very exciting as a concept. Just the thought of dispensing with blocky sprites in favour of real, live Hollywood Stars was almost too much for us fragile industry observers to bear.

But now that the concept is a a reality, there's something not quite right. The thing is, you can't help but be a bit disappointed when an actor (or actress, we're not sexist here, girls) you like appears in a game, thinking "Blimey, things must be tough for them, what a comedown, how the mighty have fallen, etc, etc". Let's be honest, no matter how good his performance was, we all knew Mark Hamill was desperate for work as soon as Wing Commander 3 was released.

Since then Dennis Hopper, Tia Carrere and even Kelly from Dif'rent Strokes have graced Full-Motion Video adventures, and in the process have disgraced themselves. Now it's time for silver-screen veteran Ned Beatty — NED FLIPPIN' BEATTY — to join their ranks, thanks to the much-vaunted development team, Rocket Science.

Loadstar is Rocket Science's first release for the PC, although it's been around on the consoles for a few months already. It tells the story of Tully Bodine who, far from being a character in Home And Away as his name suggests, is in fact an interplanetary cargo trucker.

But Tully has a big problem, other than the obvious glitch in his acting career. While on a refreshing lunar break to Titan (that's one of Jupiter's-moons, space-dweebs), Tully has picked up an illegal cargo of banned livestock — veal, no doubt — and as a result he's being the chased by the space sheriff, played by Beatty himself.

After the initial showdown in the space cafeteria at the start of the game, Tully decides it might be a good idea to avoid any trouble by finding the space launch pad and smuggling the animals off-world. But rather than keeping a low-profile and sneaking through the police blockades, he instead arms his lasers and prepares to blast his way out. Hasn't he heard of stealth?

When the game begins, we join Tully inside his cargo truck, which is in fact more like a train. The vehicle runs along rails that form a vast network stretching right across the surface of the moon, so your first priorty is to guide Tully to the end of each of the four levels.

This isn't quite as easy as it sounds, as the rail network branches off in different directions and only way of reaching your goal is to keep a watchful eye on the compass at the top of the screen. This always points towards your destination, forewarning you which way to turn at the next junction.

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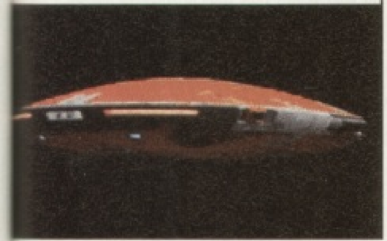
It's a bit like...

...LucasArts' Rebel Assault. Well, sort of, anyway. Again it's a simple shoot-'em-up that drags the player around a pre-set flight path, and like Loadstar you have a little control as to which direction you turn next. Unfortunately Loadstar isn't quite as varied though.

Loaded!

As Tully speeds down the rails with his cargo of illegal contraband, the police will literally stop at nothing to prevent him from reaching the space port. Initially attacking with patrol craft and automated police robots, they eventually bring out the big boys - huge military skimmers armed to the teeth with pulse cannons and high-explosive rockets!



You steer your cargo ship with the cursors key, while the Loadstar's cannon is aimed and fired using the mouse. Engaging the enemy isn't particiuarly difficult as most can only sustain a single hit before exploding. Watch out for their return fire though, and activate the Loadstar's temporary shields if the going gets a bit too tough.

However, as easy as the combat may be, it's made a damn sight harder by the fact that you have to concentrate both on the track ahead as well as the incoming laser blasts. The rails are littered with debris that must be avoided, as must huge transport trucks that slowly cruise along. Unless you sound your horn you'll plough straight into the back of a HGV!

What's worse, to turn a corner you have to hit the cursor keys with plenty of time to spare, so as well as looking out for enemy ships, road accidents and the navigation compass, you must watch out for branches in the track.

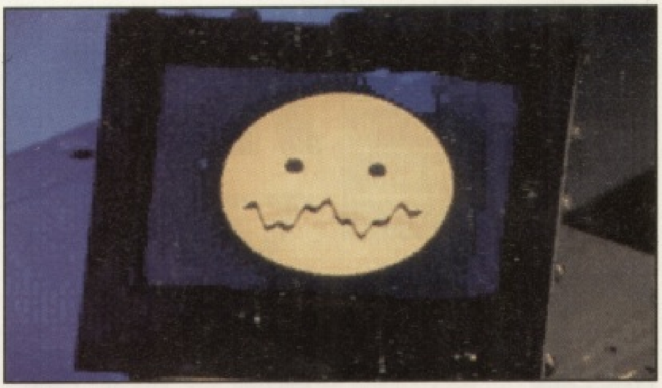
Every so often your on-board computer warns of another vehicle speeding towards you. It's generally advisable, as you may have noticed whilst crossing roads yourself, to get out of the way before you're crunched like a gnat, by turning off at the last minute.

Now all this might be enough to induce a bad case of road-rage in Captain Prozac himself, but it certainly pays not to lose your rag too often. Shooting down the pesky rival truckers and road hogs is fair game, but should you shoot down one of the police ships (who don't mind shooting at you), the next wave of the buggers will be bigger and more accurate than before! This means you have to adopt a strange Taoist attitude of non-aggression, defending against the heathen lasers of your oppressors with your righteous space shield whilst stemming your own rising bilious wrath.

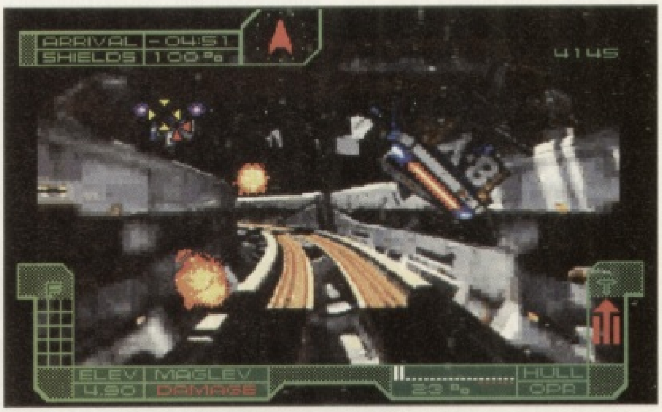
And — boy! — is there plenty of that. It's quite sad, really, because Rocket Science have done everything right up to the point of the gameplay. The plot and script are both pretty solid, the acting is amazingly good (for an FMV comptuer game, at least) and the actual concept of the game is reasonably innovative.

But at the end of the day Loadstar is just an extremely linear point-'n'-shoot blaster. The clumsy control interface means you can't just sit back and enjoy blasting things, and the total lack of variation in the courses makes it incredibly tricky to know where you are, let alone where you're going.

Loadstar isn't completely terrible though — at the very least it's challenging — but unfortuntely the PC has much better games along these lines to offer. In all, it's a real disappointment, especially since Loadstar is from a team so obviously experienced and talented as Rocket Science. Let's just hope their next batch of games lives up to their potential.

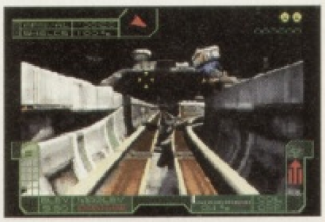


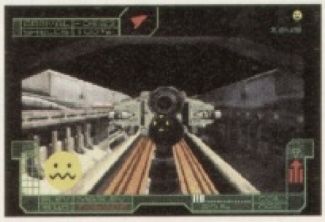
Sad burned-out 80s' Acid House fans will doubtless be rushing to get hold of Loadstar, as it features their favourite little pal, a smiley face (like the one from The Watchmen, but without the blood). But this is no ordinary hedonistic icon. This one is, in fact, your computer pal, who offers advice at pertinent moments during the game. Generally it's something useful like 'Aieeeee!', but he's very good at warning you of oncoming threats. Shame about his irritating whiny voice, though.



(Above) When the going get tough, don't get going, raise your shields!

(Below) Keep an watchful eye on the compass at the top of the screen, otherwise you'll never reach the space port.





LOADSTAR^CD

BMG/ROCKET SCIENCE

(0171) 973 0011

£TBA OUT NOW

MINIMUM **SPEC**

25MHz 486, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM and mouse.

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

Sound Blaster, Ad Lib, Pro Audio Spectrum, Gravis UltraSound and Roland soundcards, amongst many others.

*THE **GOOD...***

- Features a top cast, including the ever-more-portly Ned Beatty.
- Great atmosphere adds a bit of tension and excitement.

*...AND THE **BAD***

- The controls are extremely irksome.
- Deceptively limited gameplay.

Overall

68%

David Upchurch indulges in shady shenanegans with the shadiest of them all, Machiavelli.

Machiavelli The Prince

Back in the 15th Century there was one man you probably wouldn't have trusted as far as you could chuck his dead body, and he was Niccolo Machiavelli. Now, thanks to MicroProse, you can relive the glories of old Nick in the Middle Ages, and make sure it's not your dead body they'll be chucking.

Politics and intrigue is where it's all at in this unassuming little game. The aim is to trade your way from a humble merchant (just how humble depends on the difficulty level you decide to start at) to a stinkingly rich potentate around Venice. The more money you have, the more bribes you can authorise, the more arsonists you can hire and, yes, the more assassins you can pay for.

By knocking off your rivals, who are busy trying to do the same to you, you increase in power and get to positions of importance (such as politician or Pope), which you can then abuse to your own ends (so nothing much has changed in the last 400 years).

All of the underhand stuff depends on having the necessary readies at your disposal, though, so a good business head on your shoulders is essential, especially in the opening stages of the game. Send your ships and caravans abroad to trade for goods that are worth more in other towns, and then sell them for a whopping great profit. Set up regular trade routes and watch the money roll in. It's a bit like Elite in that respect, without the space combat parts.

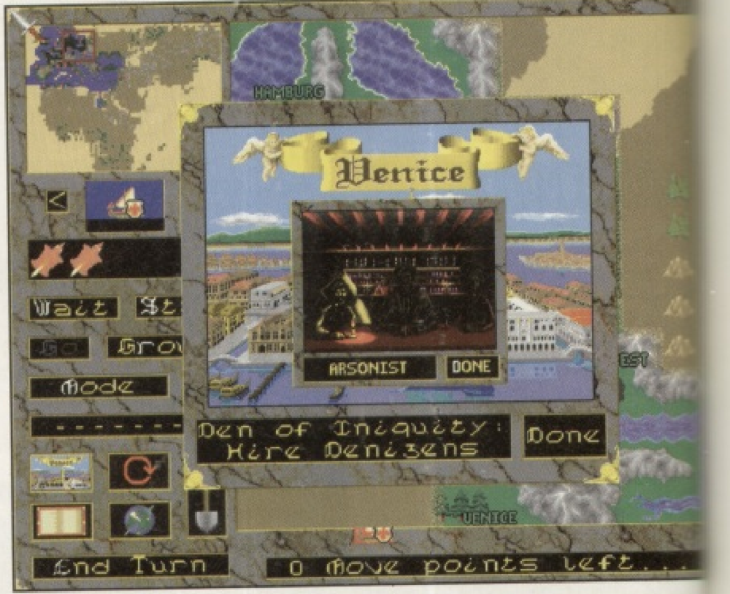
Now I've gone and done it. The first comparision. Okay, let's get this out of the way now. Machiavelli isn't an original game. Not in the slightest. Not by a long chalk. Just look at the screen shots and see if you can spot the similarity. Yes, it's a Colonization clone, and the gameplay is remarkably similar.

The political side is a new addition, and there's less fighting it out with enemy forces, but the basic principle, the maps and the whole feel is exactly the same. Compared with Master Of Magic it's also very similar. Compared with The Patrician the plot similarity between the two are striking. You get the jist? Originality is not a factor here.

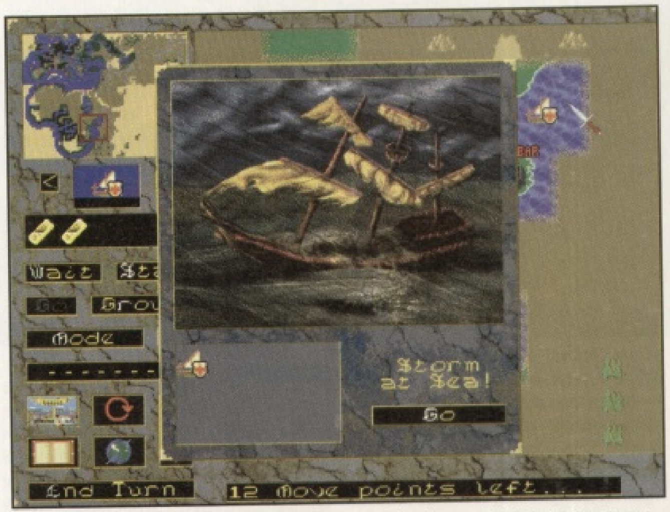
Put that aside for a moment, and let's talk about Machiavelli on its own grounds. Graphically we're talking SVGA with some nice screens, and the map icons aren't half bad either — in fact, the over-elaborate, semi-illegible text is about the only blemish here. As for sound, er, well, it would probably have been better if there hadn't been any, rather than the annoying musak that rumbles out incessantly.

Which leaves us gamesplay to consider, and this is where we get to major brownie-point time. Machiavelli doesn't half play well. You can tailor the difficulty level to suit your wishes and guarantee a good game each time, while a random map option means you should always have a fresh challenge. The artificial intelligence of the computer traders is excellent, and the multi-player options (on one PC or via e-mail) are a welcome addition.

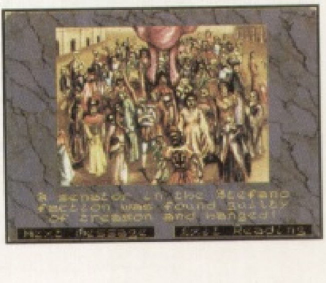
Some good plus points then, and if you enjoyed any of the other similar games I've mentioned then a look at Machiavelli is definitely in order. You'll just have to accept that you're getting more of the same rather than anything new. It's a cautious recommendation, but the best I can offer under the circumstances.



(Above) Fire at will! Machiavelli allows you to do all manner of nastiness to your rivals.



(Above) The quality of artwork in Machiavelli is exceptional. Sadly, however, it's let down by the strange font used for the text — it's barely readable, to be honest.


A senator in the Stefano faction was found guilty of treason and hanged!

Machiavelli The Prince

MicroProse/Holistic Design

(01454) 326523

£39.99 Out Now

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 386, SVGA, 4Mb RAM, 8Mb of hard disk space and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Sound Blaster soundcard.

THE GOOD...

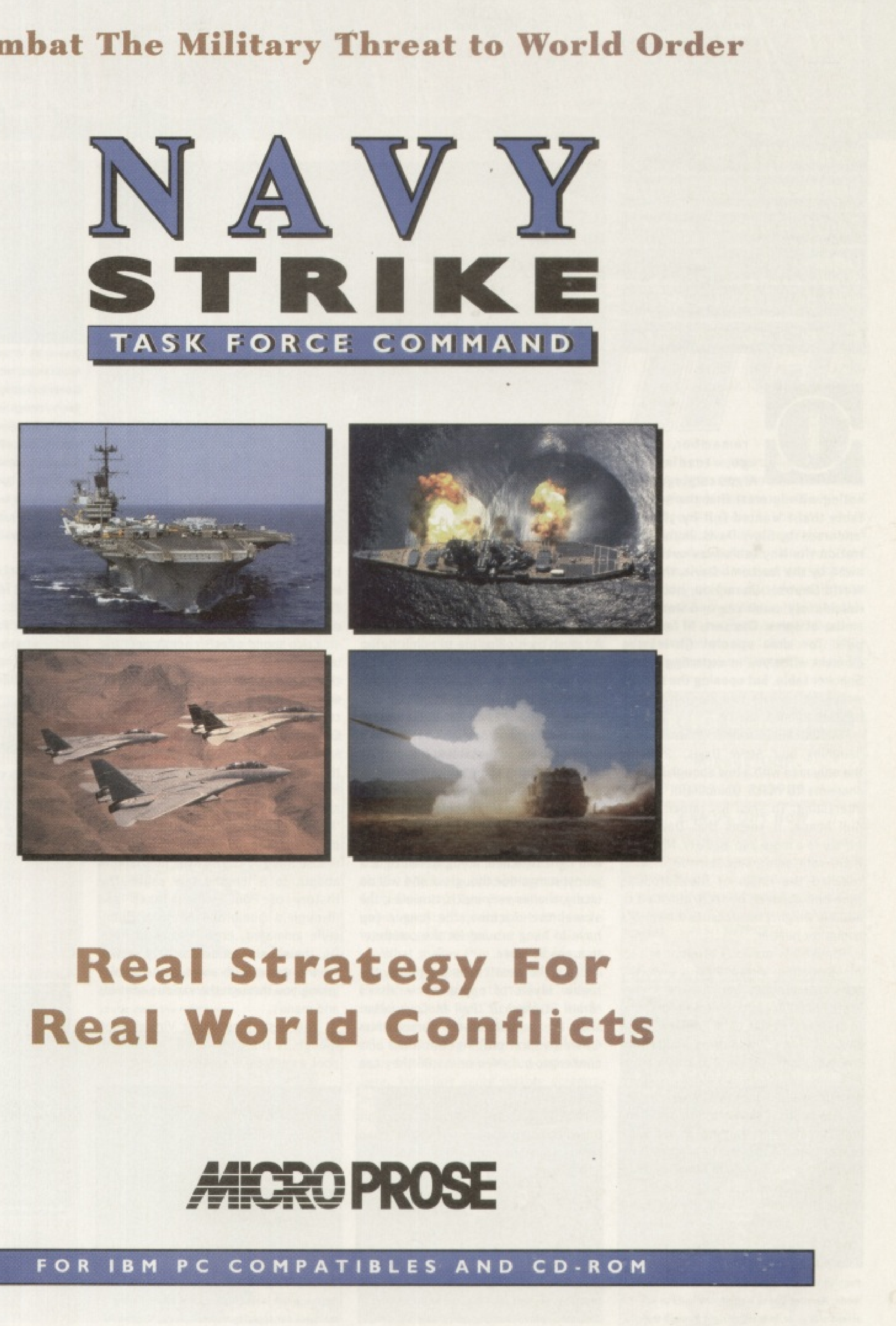
- You can assassinate people.
- You can burn their houses down.
- You can even slander them to your heart's content.

...AND THE BAD

- You don't get to witness any of the assassinations, arsons or slanderings for yourself.
- It's hardly an original game idea.
- The sound's a bit, well, *crap*.

Overall

78%



Combat The Military Threat to World Order

NAVY STRIKE

TASK FORCE COMMAND

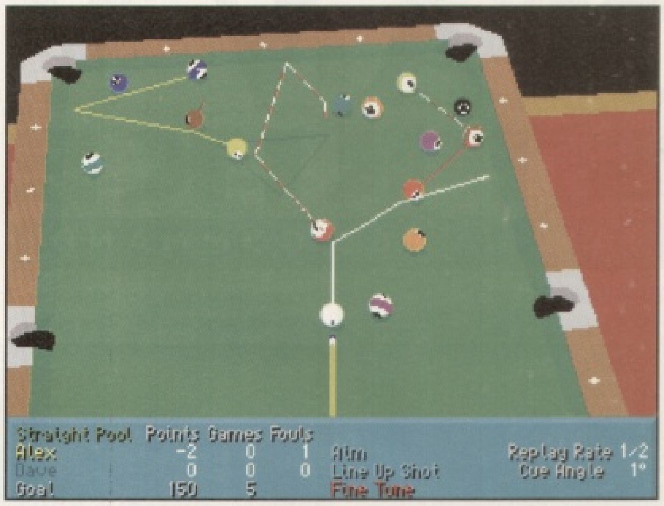
Real Strategy For Real World Conflicts

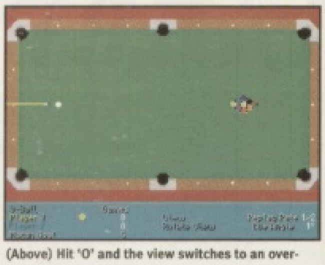
MICROPROSE

FOR IBM PC COMPATIBLES AND CD-ROM

Virtual Pool^CD

As much as Alex Simmons likes Virtual Pool, he's hoping that Interplay's next game will be Virtual Lager. Finger's crossed, eh?





(Above) Hit 'O' and the view switches to an overhead camera, letting you judge angles and distances accurately and quickly. If you're anything like me though. you'll still miss the shot!

(Left) To help you aim your shot, especially long-distance ones, there's a function called tracking. Like a bunch of atoms in a chain reaction diagram, this applies a line to the path of each ball, indicating just where the balls will go even before you touch the cue ball. This is affected, to some degree, by spin and power, but it's a good approximation.

I remember, years ago, reading an Argos catalogue and noting with interest that the snooker table that I wanted (4ft by 3ft) was 'endorsed' by Steve Davis. In the illustration the tiny table was overshadowed by the fearsome Davis, the then World Snooker Champion, holding a ridiculously small cue and wearing a smile, of sorts. The sort, in fact, you hold for that special Christmas moment when you're expecting a mini Snooker table, but opening the special wrapping reveals two monogrammed hankies and a Slade LP.

Virtual Pool, too, is endorsed by 'laughing boy' Steve Davis, probably the only man with a low enough level of charisma to make Damon Hill appear interesting. To shed his rather... well, dull image, it seems that Davis has turned to a more 'hip' activity, Nine-ball Pool, with some success, too. Having reached the finals of the European Nine-ball Masters, he feels qualified to add his weighty monicker to Interplay's computer hustler.

Unlike his previous attempt at recommendation, Virtual Pool is a worthy steed. Continuing from where Archer MacLean's Pool left off some years ago, it brings a model of a full-sized pool table to your PC, and using a nifty control system enables you to knock a few balls around, using the mouse to 'pull' the cue back and 'stroke' the cue ball. In the words of Davis himself, "the whole thing is frighteningly realistic." As much as it pains me to admit it, the man's right.

The level of control, enabling you to swivel the table and zoom quickly and effortlessly, brings an added dimension to computer pool, one which is difficult to appreciate without actually playing it. Running the thing on a Pentium in SVGA is scarily accurate, adding not only shadows and numbers to the balls, but also a complete background bar scene complete with cue rack, stools and light switches. If you haven't got a monster machine though, a 486 will do nicely, thanks-very-much. However, the slower the machine, the longer you have to hang around for the computer to make its move.

Like the best chess programs, the higher levels of opponent — that's 'Bram Stroker' or 'Rail McCoy' rather than the equally-arsely named 'Mrs Offen' (work it out) — offer more of a challenge, but even on a 486 they can be painfully slow. What's more, Interplay recommends a 386 minimum! Take it from me, if you've got a 386, you don't want to play this!

Crisp sound effects complement the action nicely, with the notable exception of a crowd. Of course, you could argue that in a bar there would be no crowd but then where does the hideous Chas 'n' Dave-esque music come from?

To complete the package the rest of the CD is crammed packed with multimedia offerings, from Pool and trick-shot tutorials by a fat man known as 'Machine Gun' Lou Butera (laughable, until you see some trick shots and realise this guy knows what he's talking about), to a lengthy tale called The History of Pool, which takes you through a humorous Monty Python-style animated...erm, History of Pool. Oh, there's also an on-line help service for the game, with some bloke's voice taking you through the various controls and menus.

The best thing about Virtual Pool, though, is the game itself. All sorts of pool games have come and gone, with Archer MacLean ruling the blue baize for the last few years. But now there's a new Paul Newman for Archer's Minnesota Fats, and it's simply blinding. Even better, it's a damn sight cheaper than a Steve Davis 'endorsed' Snooker table.

VIRTUAL POOL^CD

INTERPLAY/CELERIS

(01235) 821666

£44.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, VGA, 2Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive, 2Mb of hard disk space and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

SVGA; All popular soundcards.

THE GOOD...

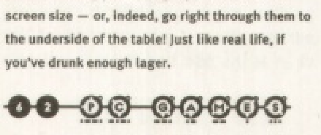
- The detailed SVGA graphics are incredible.
- Innovative control system is extremely simple to use.
- Includes a wide range of options and opponents.
- The bonus History of Pool package is a nice touch.

...AND THE BAD

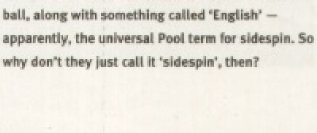
- 386 minimum? Surely not.
- Uses too many keyboard keys.

Overall

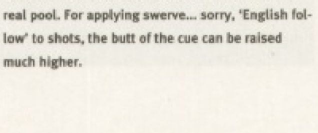
89%



Pushing the left mouse button enables the zoom mode, allowing you to magnify the balls to full screen size — or, indeed, go right through them to the underside of the table! Just like real life, if you've drunk enough lager.



Every kind of draw and follow (that's backspin and topspin to you and me, folks) can be put on the ball, along with something called 'English' — apparently, the universal Pool term for sidespin. So why don't they just call it 'sidespin', then?



The default angle of the cue from the table is 1 degree, which is roughly the norm when playing real pool. For applying swerve... sorry, 'English follow' to shots, the butt of the cue can be raised much higher.

Three years on from the first Perfect General, the sequel is here at last. Alex Simmons got tanked up and went to war.

Perfect General II CD

It used to be true that wargames were dull, nerdy, badly presented products which were far too complex for anyone of average IQ to enjoy. They had about as much appeal for arcade games players as being violently beaten about the head with a large stick. Possibly less. Perfect General II (PG2) doesn't exactly break the mould with stunning graphics, amazing sound effects, spectacular fireworks and free flak jackets in every pack, but it's a heck of a lot more appealing than most.

Like nearly all war games, it's played using icons which represent military units under the commander's control. These units are shifted around a patchwork grid of hexagons which make up the field of battle (this is why features such as rivers, roads, hills and so on look unnaturally angular). Each game lasts for a predetermined number of rounds, and points are scored in line with the mission objectives.

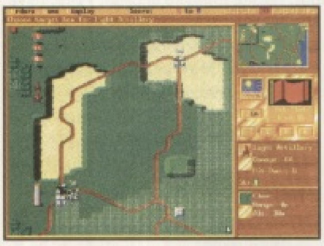
But don't turn the page just yet, because PG2 has more to offer. To begin with, it has live action video sequences of generals offering strategic advice. Not only are these snippets useful, they also create the kind of atmosphere and involvement that is usually lacking in this kind of game. The battle field sound effects are pretty good too, with lots of rumbling tanks, shuffling foot soldiers and realistic gunfire. Cosmetic effects aren't the first concern of wargame die-hards, but they might persuade everyone else to give the genre a try.

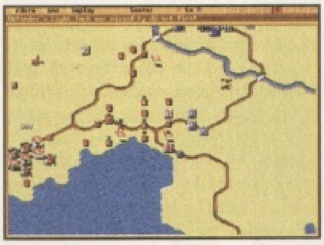
The good news for wargamers and for everyone else is PG2's depth. There are almost 100 missions in all, including over 80 individual scenarios and four major campaigns. This tramples all over the original's measly 13 battlefields and compares extremely well to PG2's rivals. The scenarios are divided into 16 groups, ranging from randomly-generated terrain, through historical encounters, short battles, islands, table-top conversions and the four campaigns: Battle of the Bulge, The Kursk Campaign, Eclipse of the Sun and Desert Fox.

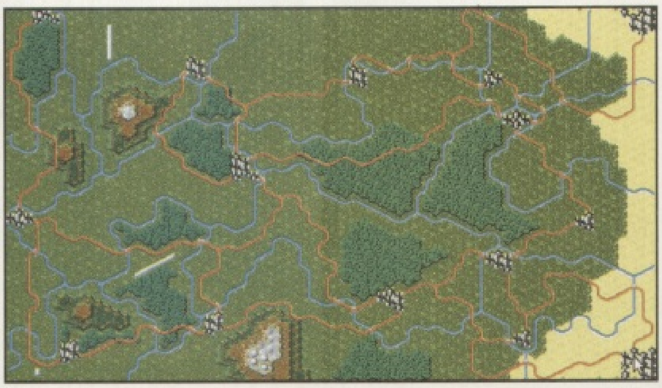
Long-term playability is enhanced further due to the wide range of options. Five difficulty levels, modem play, attacker/defender choice, environmental effects and variable game lengths are just some of them, but believe me, there are many more. Also, anyone who's played the original game will find plenty of new units added to the usual range of infantry forces and basic hardware, including anything from Elephant Tanks, mobile machine guns, tactical air support and even machine guns nests.

What makes PG2 better than most games of its type is the variety it offers in terrain design, battlefield views, options, units and scenarios. It has some minor drawbacks such as plain but functional graphics and presentation, but there are high points even here, including score history screens, an admirably laconic manual, two books of maps and an imminent scenario editor. In short, there's an awful lot for fans of the genre to enjoy.

Even so, like the majority of most other wargames, Perfect General 2 won't give you instant gratification. If you haven't tried one before, you'll need to put in a lot of work to understand the first principles and you have to get your head around the idea that the strategy is far more important than the way the game looks. If you can do that, and if you're looking to discover what wargames are all about, this is a great place to start.


The board game ancestors of this genre still haunt its PC implementation. These functional (if cute) graphics won't excite many.


The battle exchanges are relatively exciting, with good sound effects and the satisfaction of knowing you've made the right moves.


There are over eighty individual scenarios and four full historical campaigns, each with its own map lovingly reproduced on screen and in a separate booklet.

An animated introduction sequence is unusual for any wargame, but PG2 boasts one.

PERFECT GENERAL II CD

MIRAGE/QQP

(01260) 299909

£44.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 386, SVGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive, 10Mb hard disk space and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Sound Blaster soundcards.

THE GOOD...

- Stacked full of options.
- Cram packed with good action sound effects.
- Loads of scenarios rectify the main fault of the original.

...AND THE BAD

- Battlefield graphics are a tad functional.
- In-game presentation could be more interesting.

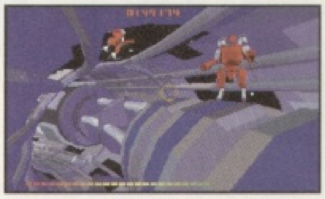
Overall

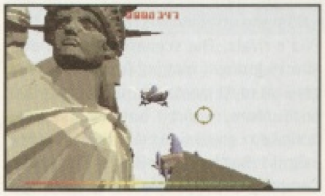
85%

Alex Simmons went hunting for aliens in Infogrames shoot-'em-up. Now he wishes he hadn't.

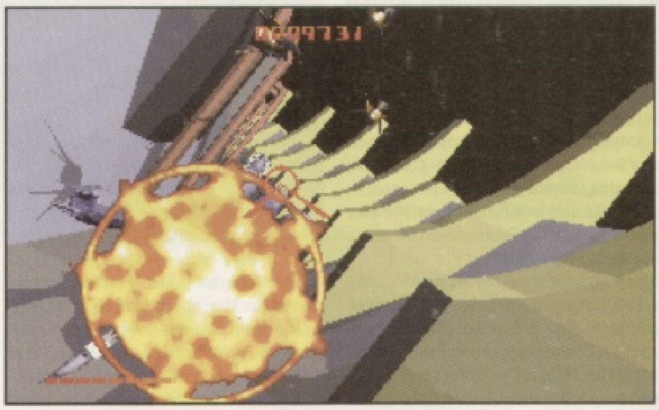
Chaos Control CD

Let's play a little guessing game. I'm going to give you a brief description of Chaos Control, then I want you to try and think what score I'm going to give it, okay? Ah-ah, no peeking at the final score! Right, here goes. Chaos Control is a shoot-'em-up in which you fly along pre-rendered flight paths, blasting aliens. The level of interaction is minimal — all you have to do is aim the cursor and fire. So have you any guesses so far? If so, skip to the score panel now. If not, continue to the next paragraph.





Here we see the world famous Statue of Liberty in all her featureless, plain polygon glory.



Your spaceship follows a pre-determined flight path while alien enemies attack from every angle. Although it may look a damn sight better than Operation Wolf, it's still a case of simply pointing and shooting.

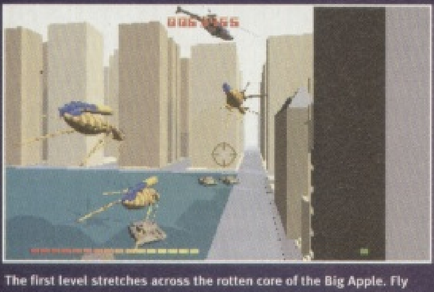
The game is divided into three clear stages, the first being set over the streets of New York. As you've probably already guessed, the aliens have invaded and are currently wreaking havoc both in the skies and down on the ground. You, as part of some crack interplanetary defence force, have been drafted in to get rid of the thieving extra-terrestrial gits and restore peace once and for all. It's hardly awe-inspiring stuff, and to be brutally honest it's about as original as a copy of Pulp Fiction bought from some dodgy geezer down the market. So have you any guesses yet? No? Okay, read on...

The enemy appear in many shapes and size, from Power Ranger-type robots to insectoid spaceships that zip through the streets of the Big Apple. Armed only with a forward-firing laser, most aliens can be eliminated with just a single hit, but mind you don't fire too rapidly otherwise the gun will overheat, rendering it useless for a few seconds. Therefore firing in controlled bursts is advisable, but not always effective. Why? Because the bloody enemy moves so fast it's often impossible to hit them, even if you know which directions they spring from! To say this game is unfair and annoying is an understatement, I can tell you.

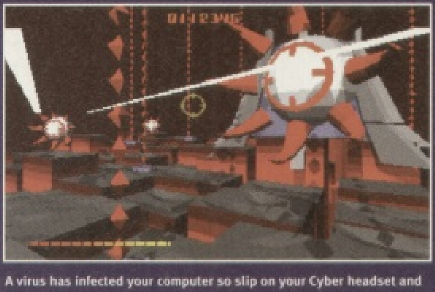
By now you're probably thinking I'm ready to give my verdict. Almost, but not quite. First let me tell you about the other stages in the game. The second takes place inside a virtual world, skimming across a printed circuit board complete with chips, diodes and resistors. The reason for this is because your main computer has been infected by a virus and the only way to kill it is to actually get in there yourself and wipe it out. Taking this into account I supposes Chaos Control scores a few extra points for originality here, but as for the gameplay, it's still the same as Level One I'm afraid — extremely limited.

The third stage is the final battle with the Kesh Rhan alien fleet in orbit around the Earth. Engaging the

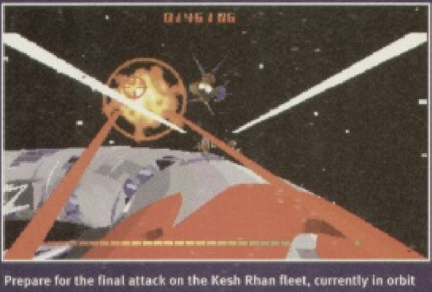
Uncontrolled Chaos



The first level stretches across the rotten core of the Big Apple. Fly around the Statue Of Liberty before diving down along the streets, then gasp in awe as the plain polygon buildings whisk past.



A virus has infected your computer so slip on your Cyber headset and zip through the bug-infested circuit board. Visually this stage looks pretty good but it's a dog to play, just like the rest of the game really.



Prepare for the final attack on the Kesh Rhan fleet, currently in orbit around Earth. More of the same enemies attack, in pretty much the same attack patterns, but the graphics are different. Yawn...

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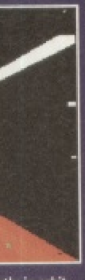

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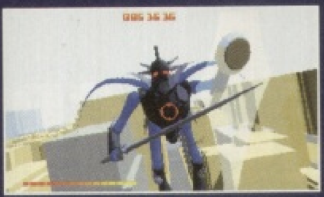
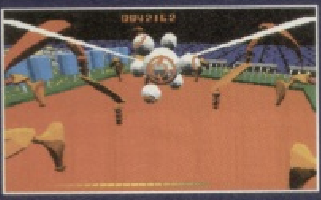
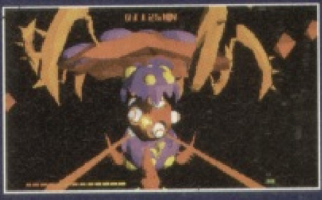
Mighty Morphin' Alien Fellas



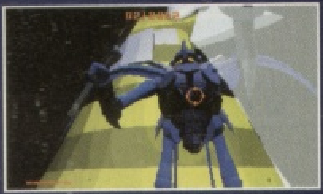
Geez, those Mighty Morphin' Power Ranger gets everywhere! What out for the geeza's sword and shoot past his protective shield.



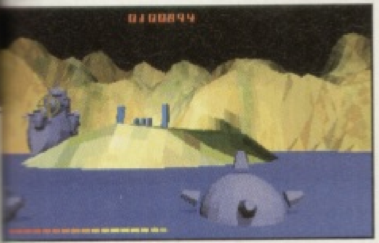
This tentacled monster errupts from the central processors in the virtual second stage. Dodge the claws and aim for its body.



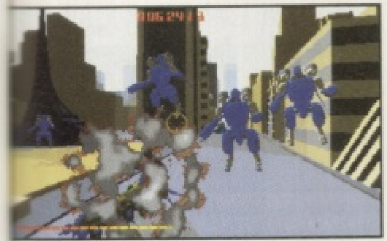
The virus that has infected your main computer is a weird mushroom/egg/spider mutant. Wipe it out by blasting the pods in the middle.



He's back and this time he's bigger! The Power Ranger returns for another kick-ass conflict but, as before, he's easily defeated.



Watch out for the mine, stupid!



The smoke on the left is the remains of a defeated opponent - annoying, huh?

short range fighters before flying in low over the mother-ship, eventually you'll dive down into a series of trenches where... get this... you actually get to choose where to go next! Yup, in a flash of inspiration it seems that the developers decided to add a sprinkling of gameplay. Not much though, as you only select forwards, left or right before the automatic pilot kicks in once again.

Although the three levels may look different from one another they are virtually identical in every other aspect. The enemies encountered on the first level return for both the other two, with only a couple of new faces to eliminate. The levels are equally frustrating to play, too.

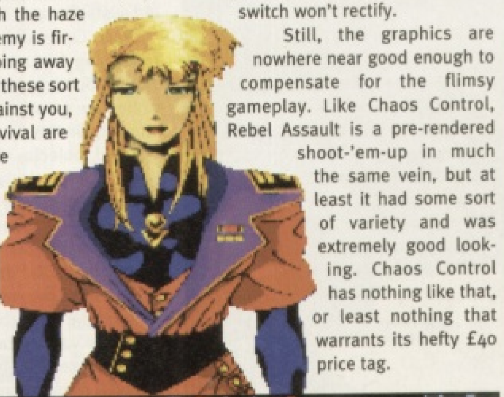
Like you, the enemy follow a pre-set attack pattern, and while this isn't a problem in most other games, it's extremely annoying in Chaos Control. The reason for this is that they don't disappear after they've been destroyed. Instead they continue to fly along, albeit on fire. Okay, so they don't return fire or hurt you in any way, but they do clutter the screen and make it difficult to aim at the next set of targets.

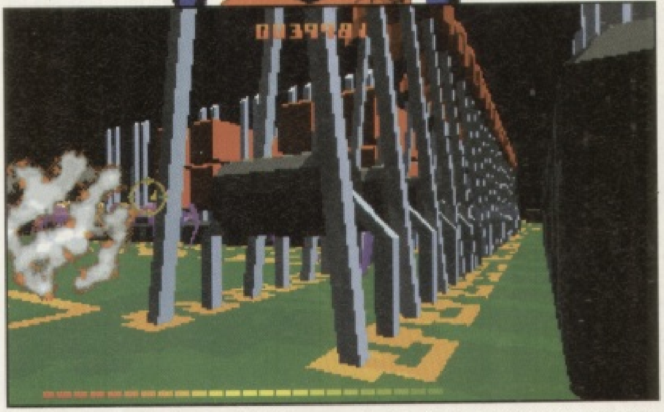
What this essentially means is that while you're staring at the monitor, trying to peer through the haze and debris, the enemy is firing like crazy, sapping away at your shield. With these sort of odds stacked against you, the chances of survival are slim on even the easiest difficulty setting. Still, the automatic save game facility makes it a little less challenging.

The chances are you're probably thinking Chaos Control should score very poorly indeed, but let me just describe the game's presentation — it may change your mind about the game (then again, it might not). On the whole it's not too bad — the graphics move quickly and swiftly, with very little slow-down or jerkiness considering the game runs directly from CD. The background graphics look a little simplistic as they're plain polygons rather than texture-mapped shapes, although this doesn't really matter too much when the game is moving at full speed. The cutscenes are also neat, mixing a load of Manga-style characters with the usual assortment of rendered spaceships and backgrounds.

As for the sound, it's not particularly offensive apart from the voice of your ship's computer, which relentlessly states the bloody obvious, telling you to 'fire' when enemies are approaching. Mind you, this is nothing the volume switch won't rectify.

Still, the graphics are nowhere near good enough to compensate for the flimsy gameplay. Like Chaos Control, Rebel Assault is a pre-rendered shoot-'em-up in much the same vein, but at least it had some sort of variety and was extremely good looking. Chaos Control has nothing like that, or least nothing that warrants its hefty £40 price tag.

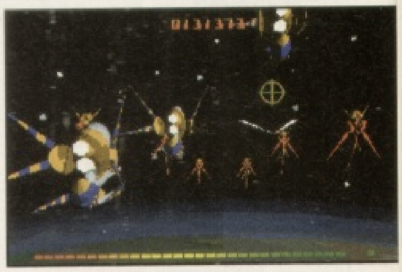




Rage in the machine! The aliens have infected your computer with a virus, leaving you no other option but to get in there yourself and wipe 'em out. Anybody fancy some chips?

It's a bit like...

...Well, I'm going to say Rebel Assault, even though LucasArts CD-ROM epic is a vastly superior game. Like Chaos Control it's a pretty simple shoot-'em-up in which the player follows pre-rendered flight paths and simply aims the cursor and fires, Operation Wolf-style. Compared to Infogrames unplayable blaster though, Rebel Assault is staggeringly brilliant, the gorgeous FMV and stunning cutscenes blowing Chaos Control's dull graphics out of the water. It's not the most playable game around but it's a damn sight better than Infogrames' turkey.



The final battle above the Earth is no push-over as the aliens attack in swarms.

So now we come to the verdict. Have you got your scores ready? Having thought long and hard about the game, taking into account Chaos Control has very little gameplay, it looks particularly average and there are only three stages, I'm going to give it a meagre 42%. Harsh I know, but justified as I'm sure you'll agree.

CHAOS CONTROL^{CD}

INFOGRAMES/PHILIPS

(0171) 738 8199

£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 486, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Sound Blaster soundcard.

THE GOOD...

- Some of the cutscenes are fairly nice.

...AND THE BAD

- Did someone say gameplay? No, I didn't think so.
- Chaos Control's plain polygon graphics are bland.
- The measly three levels lack any real variety.
- The lack of gameplay is so bad it deserves to be mentioned twice.

Overall

42%

Alex Simmons really loathes heavy metal — maybe that's why he hated Domark's shoddy tank game.

Tank Commander^CD

War is all about guns, explosions and blowing things up, so it should be fun, right? I think so, although I'm sure countless 'moral guardian' fuddy-duddies will beg to differ. They obviously haven't played Doom, because it's the most fun you can have with your flak jacket on. Tank Commander looks fun too, in a 'nuke everything' kinda way. I mean, a BattleZone for the 90s with smart texture-mapped graphics and FMV cutscenes - surely it can't fail, can it?

Well, yes, it can - and it has. What promised to be a fast-paced blast is in actuality a slow and clumsy turkey, with awkward gameplay and graphics that are simplistic and bugged to, erm, buggery, if you'll excuse the terminology.

You see, Tank Commander is a bit of a misfit. On the one hand it tries to be a simulation, desperately trying to recreate the tension of tank warfare. On the other hand it's just a shoot-'em-up - and not a very good one at that. The reason for this is simple: it just isn't enjoyable to play. Shoot-'em-ups should be exciting, packed with enemies, variation and stunning presentation. While Tank Commander has its fair share of enemies and variety, presentation and excitement are sparse to say the least.

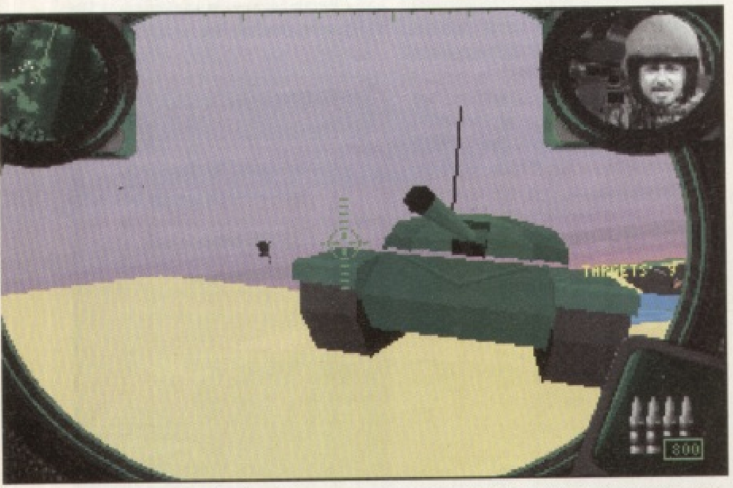
Controlling anything from one to four Challenger battle tanks, the aim of the 40-odd missions is simple - eliminate the enemy to open the exit that leads to the next stage. The separate missions are linked to form seven scenarios, ranging from desert strikes to urban assault to night raids, and although the terrain and targets may change, the 'all-out attack' objectives remain throughout, with not so much as a recon mission to try.

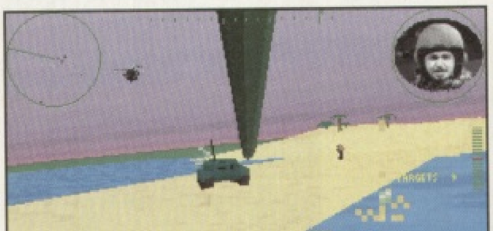
The tank can be driven manually or automatically by assigning waypoints on the in-game map. This leaves you free to man the guns, of which the Challenger has absolutely loads. In addition to the bog-standard high-calibre cannon and weedy machines guns, the tank has armour-piercing rounds (handy), air-to-air missiles (useful), a flame-thrower (not so good), and a mine destroyer (useless). Each is more effective against specific targets, so while the machine gun will rip through foot troops, it's fairly useless against armoured vehicles.

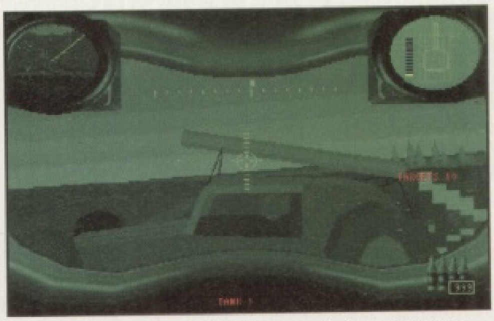
Having said that, the enemy soldiers, equipped with little more than rapid-firing pea-shooters, have a disturbing habit of quickly chipping away at your armour, reducing your tank to a smoking wreck within a few seconds. This isn't the only unrealistic aspect of the game. Take the minefields, for example. The mines are clearly visible, spread evenly across the ground and are so far apart it's possible to drive right through the middle of them without sustaining any damage whatsoever!

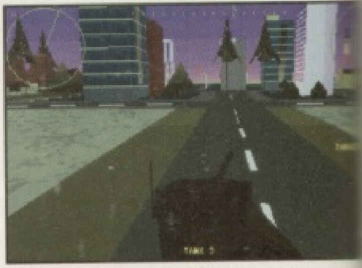
Tank Commander does have a few redeeming features, though. The network option is a welcome addition, and while the graphics aren't particularly stunning (in this day and age of texture-mapped objects, the bland polygon tanks look particularly dated), they're not abysmal by any means. The sound is okay too, if a little sparse, comprising of not much more than a handful of sound effects and digitised speech.

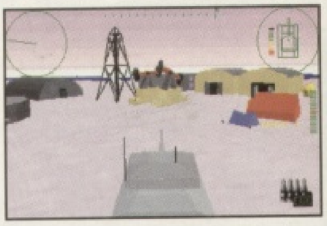
The slack presentation is simply the icing on the proverbial cake, and while the seven varying campaigns may hold *some* interest for would-be General Pattons, even ardent tank nuts will be hard pushed to get more than a couple hours of enjoyment from this tank bustin' turkey.


Geez! Take cover! Peering through the gunner's port you spot a massive enemy tank and it's heading right for you! Load up the main cannon, aim and let 'er rip!


No, don't shoot, it's one of your tanks! Tell you what, aim for the little guy on the right, he won't know what's hit him!


Somebody sack the navigator! Having taken a wrong turning at the last junction, the driver ends up ditching the tank in a nearby swamp.


With my tank it's easier to park in the town centre and I don't worry about traffic wardens anymore!


It's amazing what you can do with a lick of paint. Within seconds the tank disappears. Good, eh?

TANK COMMANDER^CD

DOMARK/BIG RED SOFTWARE

(0181) 780 2222

£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Joystick; VR headsets; IPX networks; Sound Blaster soundcard.

THE GOOD...

- All in all, Tank Commander doesn't look *that* bad.
- The multi-player network is more fun that the solo game.

...AND THE BAD

- In theory, Tank Commander sounds exciting; in practice, it's uninspiring and drab.
- The tanks are awkward to control and aspects of the gameplay (like the autopilot) are poorly executed.

Overall

55%

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Combat Air Patrol CD

Alex Simmons climbs into the cockpit and seeks out Saddam in Psygnosis' flight sim.

If you suspect you've heard about this game before, you're right — you have. Treat yourself to a sticky bun. The Amiga version of Combat Air Patrol (CAP) was released over two years ago, which helps to explain a couple of things about its newly-released PC cousin.

For starters it feels out-of-date, both in terms of technology (it's a standard flight sim with souped-up graphics) and subject matter (the Gulf War, topical four years ago but hardly on everyone's lips now). Secondly, it doesn't compare particularly well to recent ground-breaking releases, such as Electronic Arts' US Navy Fighters (USNF).

This isn't automatically a bad thing. USNF looks fantastic, but the hardware needed to cope with it is available to very few. While CAP runs like a slug on a 33MHz 386, the vast majority of 486 owners will have little trouble with it.

The storyline claims historical authenticity, and certainly the most demanding part of the game, the Campaign, follows the course of the whole Gulf War. Forget this for a minute, though. Basically, you've been assigned to the US Navy aircraft carrier Roosevelt, you've got the pick of two planes (yes, you've guessed it, the F-14 Tomcat and the F/A-18 Hornet), and you start life as a rookie.

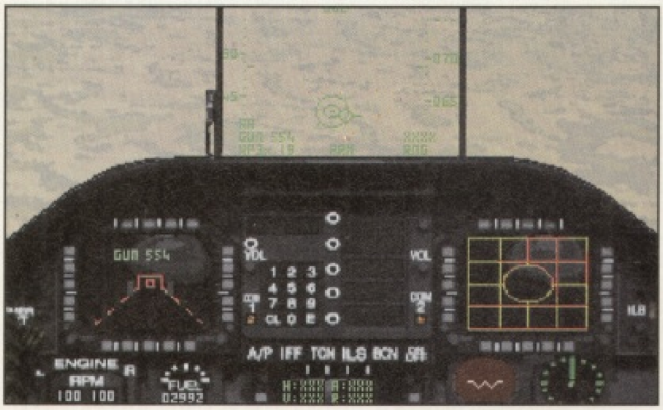
After logging on to the pilot roster you're given a choice of Instant Action, Training, Single Mission or Campaign. Instant Action chucks you up in the sky and lets you get on with it, but if you're new to flight games or a klutz with the keyboard, you're better off starting with Training. This leads you through eight flight and weapons scenarios from a simple daytime landing approach to a night-time airstrike on ground targets.

Once you're comfortable inside the cockpit, you can take on the dozen or so Single Missions. These range from raids on trains, bridges and oil rigs, to SCUD interception and convoy strikes. A particularly useful feature here allows you to choose between playing the full mission from launch to landing, or starting halfway when your fighter is already over the intended target.

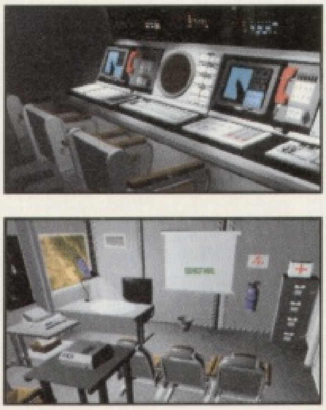
Long-term playability is down to the Gulf Campaign. This leads you through the war day-by-day and lets you decide which missions you want to take. The otherwise miserable presentation perks up here with saveable games, detailed briefings, weather reports, radar info and an arming screen. If you decide you're too chicken to kick some Saddam ass that day you can even call off sick: do this too often, though, and you'll end up with a discharge. Of course, this won't bother you if people already call you Captain Cowardy Custard or Wild Bill Yellow Belly.

By now you're probably only interested in one thing: how does it fly? The answer is: pretty well. I found a combination of joystick and keys a bit more fiddly than using the keyboard alone, but in both cases the responsiveness is very good. I can't say I noticed an awful lot of handling differences between the two planes in flight, but a spot-the-difference competition isn't your primary concern when you're zipping along a valley bottom or engaging the enemy.

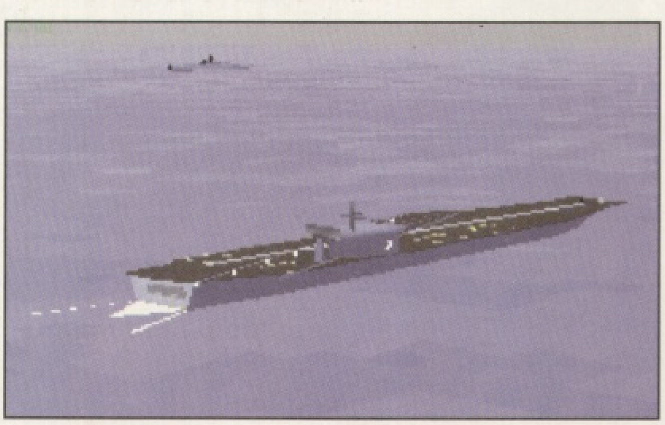
The dogfights, air-to-ground and ground-to-air combat sequences are good fun without being particularly stunning or original. The arming screen gives you about twenty weapons and other goodies to strap onto your fighter pre-launch, including missiles, lasers and fuel tanks. It isn't vital that you know each piece of hardware intimately



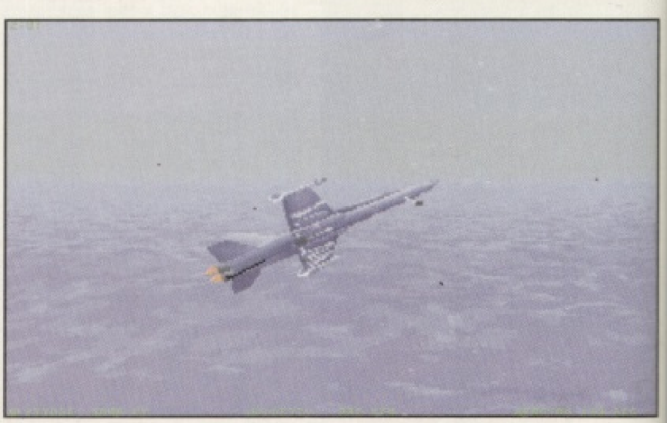
Although CAP is not quite as flashy as other flight sims around, small details, such as this illuminated cockpit display during a night flight, add to the game's appeal.



The map room and the mission briefing room, in all their rendered 3D glory.



If you get lost, badly damaged or just bored, you can always eject from your plane and live to fight another day. Don't expect a warm welcome back on the carrier, though.



CAP's a flight sim, so naturally you get more views than are useful. As well as the usual internal, external and weapons views, it also boasts a 'virtual' cockpit and a variety of target and air-to-ground perspectives.

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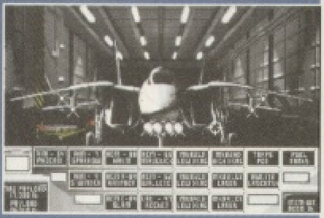
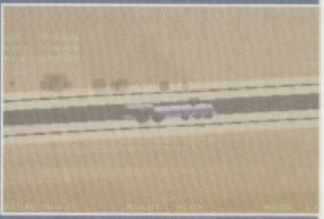
The Mother Of All Missions

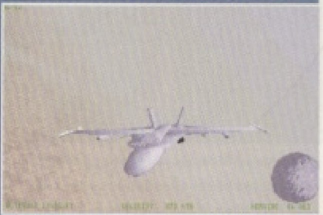


Pick a mission, any mission, and you'll be whipped off to the arming screen quicker than you can say "Falafel". Eighteen goodies are up for grabs and there's a default selection for the easily confused.

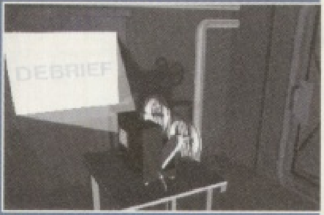
On the Roosevelt's flight deck you decide that Virtual Cockpit mode is the view for you. When you've stopped messing around with the fancy features, you might consider taking off.



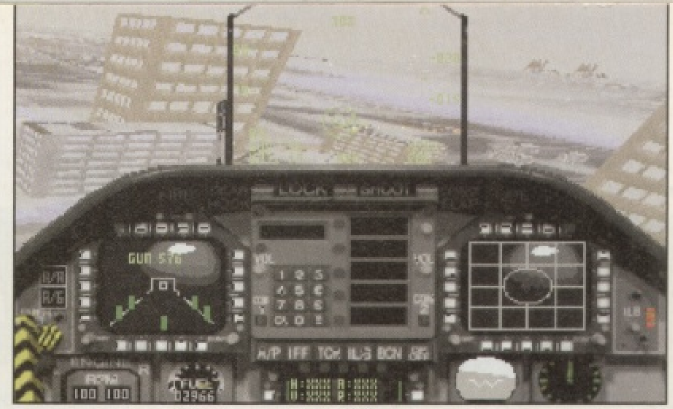
This is your target, one of Saddam Hussein's trusty trains. It may look cute as it trundles happily along, but it must be destroyed at all costs. Don't ask why — just do it.



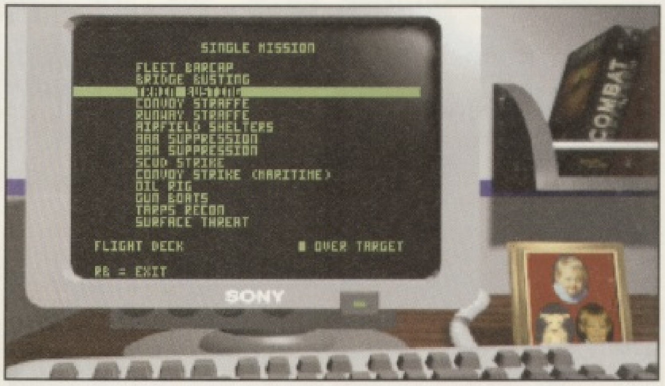
After chewing your nails for a few minutes you finally home in on the enemy's evil engine and unleash your payload. "That train's going nowhere, Mister Hussein!" you cry, stupidly.



Back on the carrier a debriefing gives you edited mission highlights. Toffee popcorn is unavailable for this performance, but you get plenty of time to gloat over your success.



Texture-mapped, Gouraud-shaded graphics are almost obligatory for modern flight sims. Though sparse, these are as good as any you'll find in rival games.



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SINGLE MISSION
FLEET BARCAP
BRIDGE BUSTING
TRAIN BUSTING
CONVOY STRAFFE
RUNWAY STRAFFE
AIRFIELD SHELTERS
AAA SUPPRESSION
SAM SUPPRESSION
SCUD STRIKE
CONVOY STRIKE (MARITIME)
OIL RIG
GUN BOATS
TARPS RECON
SURFACE THREAT

FLIGHT DECK                    ■ OVER TARGET

RB = EXIT
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The presentation is occasionally impressive but, as this simple VDU display shows, it can also be a touch on the rudimentary side.

though, since the planes' handling capabilities allow even novice pilots to show off with fancy manoeuvres and to enjoy a vicious scrap at 10,000 feet.

A flight sim without a strong tactical element is like Torquay United's chances of winning the Premiership: unrealistic. CAP prides itself on accuracy, with around 11,000km of road and rail networks allegedly recreated from actual Desert Storm charts. However, you aren't swamped with masses of data and endless briefing screens, and this will disappoint sim buffs. The Gulf Campaign relies to some extent on your achieving the right objectives at the right time, but every other part of the game lets you get on with the action.

It's a bit like...

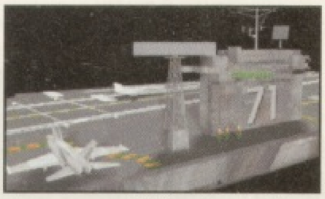
...US Navy Fighters. Electronic Arts' SVGA flight sim also gives you a choice of F-14 Tomcat and F/A-18 Hornet, but adds a few more planes to boot. Its superlative graphics are really only suitable for Pentium users, but fifty missions and a huge range of options (including a DIY campaign editor and less greedy graphics modes) mean that 486 owners can take a peek, too.

As you would expect, CAP also offers a range of internal and external views, a zoom feature, special effects such as cockpit illumination, and a nifty mission debriefing section — but none of these frills are as important as the look and feel of the action. The impression you get is that this could have been a very good game indeed, but isn't quite.

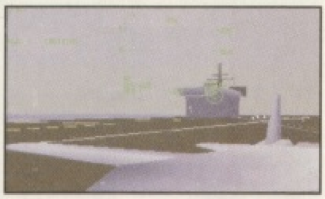
For example, the texture-mapped graphics can be stunning or sparse depending on where and how you're flying. Psygnosis claim that there are over 1,000 different types of target in a massive warzone, but much of it is empty and many of the targets aren't that interesting to look at. The missions are great as far as they go, but there's no multi-player link, there are no DIY campaigns, and the choice of two planes is miserly. It may be accurate, but it tends to confirm the feeling that CAP doesn't quite have enough options.

If there wasn't such fierce competition among flight sims at the moment, CAP would stand out. Unfortunately, releases such as USNF beat it soundly in almost every department: graphics, sound, presentation, options, number of planes, variety, and so on. There are two areas in which CAP scores better than its rivals, though. For one thing, it's relatively cheap (a fact reflected in the mark awarded); for another, you don't need a Pentium to play it.

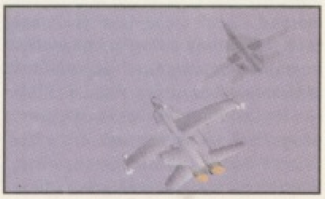
There are more sensible reasons for buying the game than this, of course. The graphics are still pretty special despite what you might have seen elsewhere, with some stomach-churning terrain features, good use of shading to create a believable sense of distance, and smooth, realistic plane designs. Forget the graphics, forget the price and forget the opposition: CAP has enough going for it in gameplay terms to deserve your attention.



The menu screen, which is based around a fully-rendered aircraft carrier deck, is nicely done.



All of the missions start off on the flight deck of your aircraft carrier.



Flying this close to the ground is not advisable, unless you have a deathwish.

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MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, SVGA, 4Mb RAM, 18Mb of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

All major soundcards and joysticks.

THE GOOD...

- Impressive graphics — if you have the right hardware.
- Interesting range of in-flight views.
- Relatively cheap.

...AND THE BAD

- Only one theatre of war (the Gulf).
- Options are limited.
- Sparse presentation.

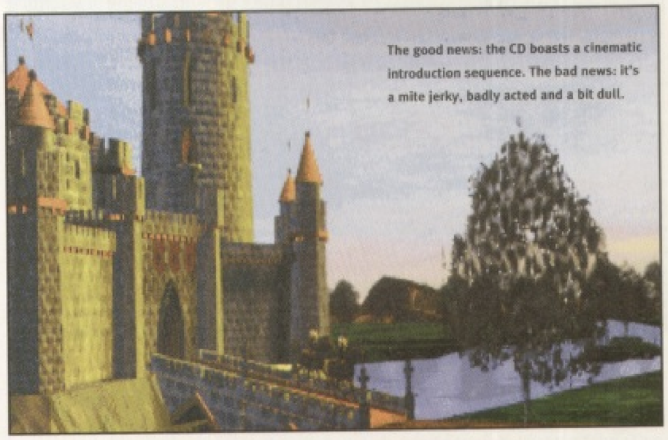
Overall

74%

Ravenloft

Stone Prophet CD

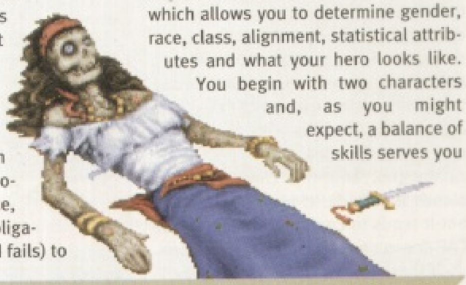
Fantastic first-person role-playing action? Sadly, er, no. David Upchurch reckons he's seen it all before.


The good news: the CD boasts a cinematic introduction sequence. The bad news: it's a mite jerky, badly acted and a bit dull.

First-person 3D RPGs really began with Dungeon Master and reached a peak a couple of years ago with the Ultima Underworld series. Probably realising that they couldn't achieve anything truly original within the hack-'n'-slash fantasy genre, programmers branched out. The result? Doom and its clones, which took the format to new heights.

Ignoring this general trend, SSI have produced Stone Prophet, a vague 'sort-of-sequel' to last year's Ravenloft: Strahd's Possession. As a concept, the game is caught somewhere between the block-scrolling Eye Of The Beholder and the visually stunning Labyrinth Of Worlds — but don't let this deter you. It's also a polished, enjoyable dungeon hack with a strong statistical base.

Experienced adventurers can probably predict the rest, but for everyone else this is what you get. First off, there's a detailed rule book. You're unlikely to read it from cover to cover unless you're barking mad, but it's useful for explaining the finer points and is there when you need it most.

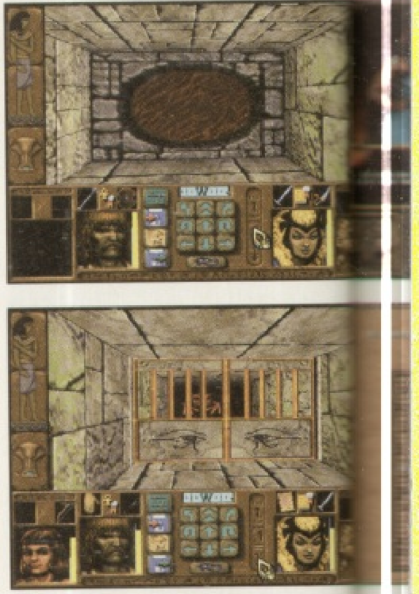


In conjunction with the hackneyed, pseudo-medieval intro sequence, it also provides the obligatory plot. This tries (and fails) to tantalize you with a mysterious disease and some fancy names, so I won't bother you with it. Let's just say there's a strong Egyptian theme, and you have to mess about in a desert before leaping down a well into a nifty labyrinth.

All the standard dungeon game elements are here and they are all very professionally done. The action kicks off with a detailed character generator which allows you to determine gender, race, class, alignment, statistical attributes and what your hero looks like. You begin with two characters and, as you might expect, a balance of skills serves you best. Once you're happy with your daring duo, it's time for action.

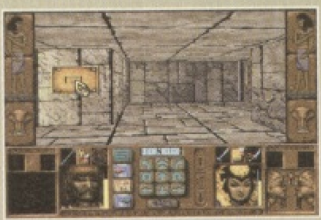
The interface is very similar to that used in the Ultima Underworld games from Origin, which makes it simple but effective. Everything is controlled with the mouse (movement, combat, spells, object selection), or a combination of mouse with keys. At first it's fiddly working out which button you should click and getting used to the screen's hot spots, but unless you're a complete dweeb you'll soon appreciate the system's ease and flexibility. Typical of this is the resizable viewing window — you don't need it if you've got a fast machine, but it's a nice touch.

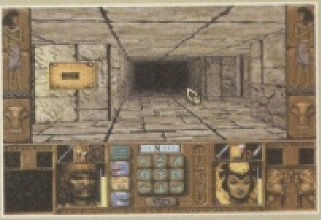
Apart from the main screen with its 3D window and character portraits, there's only one other major feature you have to deal with: the inventory. This is particularly well designed, striking a good balance between ease-of-use and complexity, with most information only a couple of mouse clicks away.

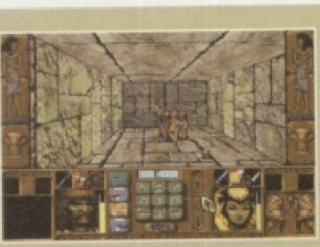

(Top & Above) There are plenty of ways to discover new locations in Stone Prophet. Doors and teleports are just two of the more obvious methods. Leaping down wells, falling down pits and tripping magical switches can also do the trick.
(Above right) Although it's hardly original, the automapper is very thorough, showing you what you've missed and letting you add text.

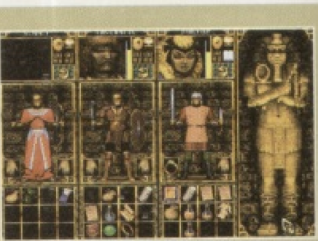
The Secret Of Success

Stone Prophet is a pretty standard first-person RPG, and if you've played a few games in the same genre the initial exploration won't tax you. Take this little sequence, for example...

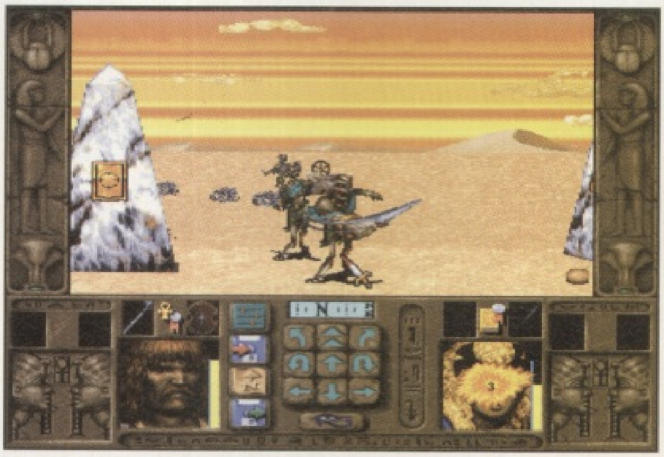

Having just zapped a couple of overgrown toads, you race around the corner and find a switch on the wall. You press the switch, expecting the gate ahead to open.


But no! The gate remains closed and the wall opens up instead, in classic well-would-you-believe-it fashion. Not one to ignore the chance of entering a secret room, you venture forth.

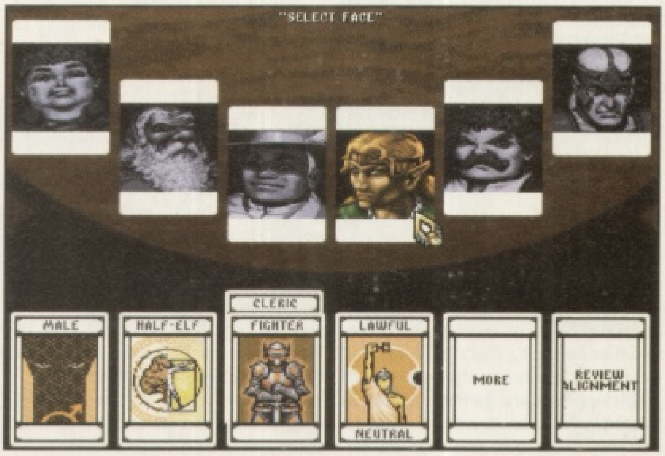

As you can see, the last hero in these parts got spiked. His grisly end is your good fortune, though — he kindly dropped half a dozen useful objects for you to collect and keep.


With a laugh and a wink to fate, you drop each item individually into your inventory. Things are getting a bit crowded in here. Maybe you should look for someone else to share the load?

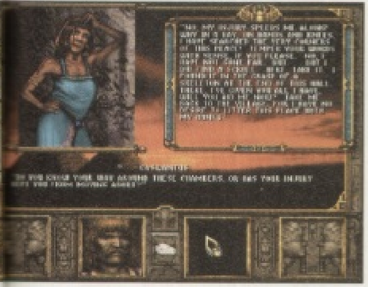
(Below) If you're looking for traditional 'My turn, your turn' combat sequences, you won't be disappointed by Ravenloft — it's got 'em by the bucket-load.

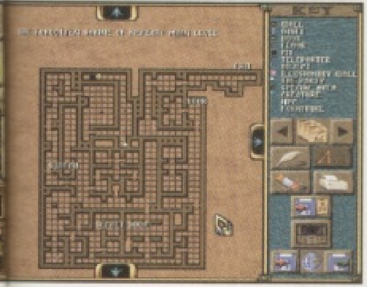


(Below) If you don't like SSI's default two-man party, the character generation screens let you create your own from scratch. Bearded chaotic dwarfs with attitude are ready and waiting.



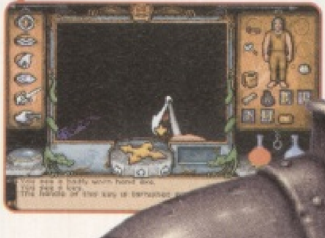
(Below) You begin the game with two characters but your party can cope with a max of four. This refugee will join you with a little persuasion.





It's a bit like...

...Labyrinth Of Worlds. The second in the Ultima Underworld series is still one of the best first-person fantasy RPGs around, despite being nearly three years old. Varied gameplay and great variety in monsters, objects, magic and missions are features it shares with Stone Prophet — but overall Labyrinth is a smoother, more interesting and more atmospheric experience.



The programmers have also managed to cram all four characters' inventories, their stats and their magical abilities all onto one screen — no mean feat.

Once you've understood the basics of keeping your adventurers alive, you can start to do some serious exploring. Stone Prophet's terrain is a good mixture of claustrophobic labyrinths and wide open spaces, and for both the automapper is invaluable. Apart from letting you make your own notes which can be saved and printed, it also shows you what you might have missed. Don't be deceived by a patch of land or dungeon which appears to contain nothing of interest. Consulting the map can reveal objects, an illusory wall, or a trap door nearby.

The automapper also displays the locations of all the monsters. There are over two dozen hostile creatures lurking in the Stone Prophet gameworld, ranging from simple zombies, vultures, fire-spitting toads and snakes to savage minotaurs and manscorpions, unpredictable pyre elementals and gruesome shadows. It's not a huge collection of adversaries and the lack of variety sometimes shows, but their quantity and toughness more than make up for it later in the game.

Combat is a simple point-'n'-click affair in which your characters and their foes rapidly take turns to inflict heavy-duty damage on each other. Over forty different types of weapon and armour can be found and there are over a hundred spells and magical abilities to make use of, so it's not such an awesome task. Naturally, most skills are only available if you have enough experience, but the more you fight the more proficient you become.

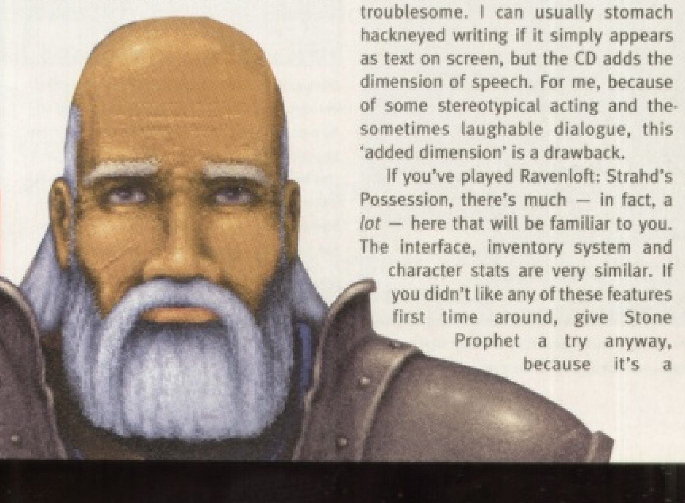
Even if your characters die as a result of their encounters with the undead, it isn't necessarily that major a catastrophe. Resurrection spells bring new life to an old corpse and fresh characters can be added to your party at fairly frequent intervals. Prevention is obviously better than cure, though, and there are plenty of healing potions, salves and opportunities for rest to keep you healthy.

There's a whole lot more to the game than I've managed to cram in so far, including encounters with non-player characters who engage you in short missions, special features such as the ability to fly, and a whole range of puzzles involving switches, pressure pads, traps, pits, false walls and keys. None of this is particularly original, but it's kind of comforting.

The graphics and sound are equally unspectacular by today's standards. Stone Prophet's dungeon graphics have the look and feel of a game released a couple of years ago — that is, while they're not outstanding, they're still pretty good. The sound is a bit more troublesome. I can usually stomach hackneyed writing if it simply appears as text on screen, but the CD adds the dimension of speech. For me, because of some stereotypical acting and the sometimes laughable dialogue, this 'added dimension' is a drawback.

If you've played Ravenloft: Strahd's Possession, there's much — in fact, a *lot* — here that will be familiar to you. The interface, inventory system and character stats are very similar. If you didn't like any of these features first time around, give Stone Prophet a try anyway, because it's a slightly better game. The action has been tweaked to produce a more compact role-playing experience, and the atmosphere is radically different.

If you haven't played the first game, ignore it and play this. It isn't the most sensational RPG on the market and its graphics are beginning to look a little dated, but the game design is very good indeed. I've given it a decent mark because I can play first-person 3D fantasy RPGs until my head falls off. If you're heartily sick of the genre and can't face another hack-and-slash adventure, the advice is simple: Avoid it.



RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHET CD

MINDSCAPE/SSI

(01444) 246333

£44.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, 4Mb of hard disk space, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Cyberman stick; all major soundcards (but you don't get speech with Ad Lib, of course).

THE GOOD...

- Lots of exploration and mapping.
- Excellent statistical basis.
- Polished design from start to finish.

...AND THE BAD

- We've seen it all before.
- In-game graphics and sound are nothing special.

Overall

70%

Frontier First Encounters^CD

David Upchurch can't shake off a nagging feeling of *déjà vu* as he plays GameTek's space trading sequel.

It's inevitable that people will argue over what makes a 'good game', but I don't think there's ever been a release that's divided public opinion quite so much as David Braben's Frontier. It was, of course, the long-awaited sequel to the 8-bit classic, Elite, and for every gamer who raved about it and proclaimed it a classic, there was another who denounced it as a disappointing turkey.

Well, now here's Frontier: First Encounters, and no doubt the arguments will begin all over again. Unsurprisingly, the basic structure of the game is the same as always — you start off with a handful of credits and a feeble, under-powered spaceship, and your aim is, well, you decide. First Encounters offers you a vast game universe that you're free to explore and exploit as you wish, and you can attempt to become anything from the galaxy's wealthiest trader to the pirate scourge of the spaceways.

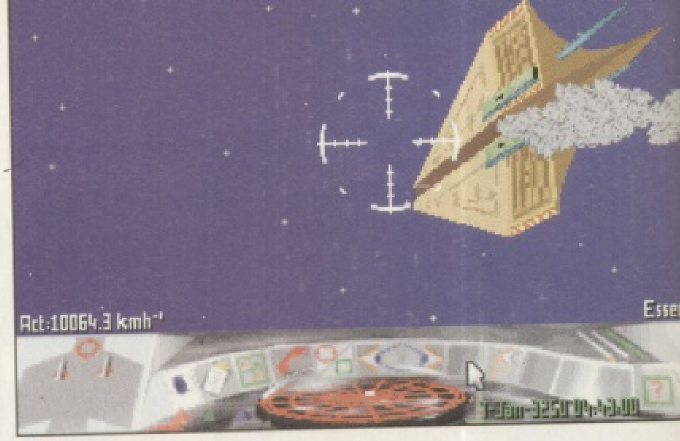
Unlike Frontier, which gave you a choice of three initial launch points to begin playing from, First Encounters has just one — a nasty little planet residing the arse-end of nowhere, where lawlessness is rife and dogfights with unscrupulous rivals are inevitable. The ship-to-ship combat was one of Frontier's weaker elements, and the good news is that it's been improved no end for First Encounters; it's no longer a case of 'zap the pixel' — now you actually get to see the enemy ships up close as they weave around. I still wouldn't say the combat is on a par with TIE Fighter's in the excitement stakes, but it's a step in the right direction.

However, although this non-stop combat makes for an exciting opening to the game, it can also makes for a very frustrating one — unless you're a skilled pilot, you'll often find yourself getting blown up almost as soon as you've taken off. Frontier veterans will probably have the good sense to hyperspace to a safer area of space before they begin proper play.

As you travel from planet to planet, trading goods, battling enemy ships and slowly amassing enough cash to upgrade your ship's systems and weaponry, it's hard not to feel that you've seen and done it all before. Apart from the improved combat system, First Encounters' only other major enhancement lies in its graphics; the light-sourced ships, space stations and planets look far more impressive than they ever did in Frontier, although the texture mapping is still a little rough and grainy-looking.

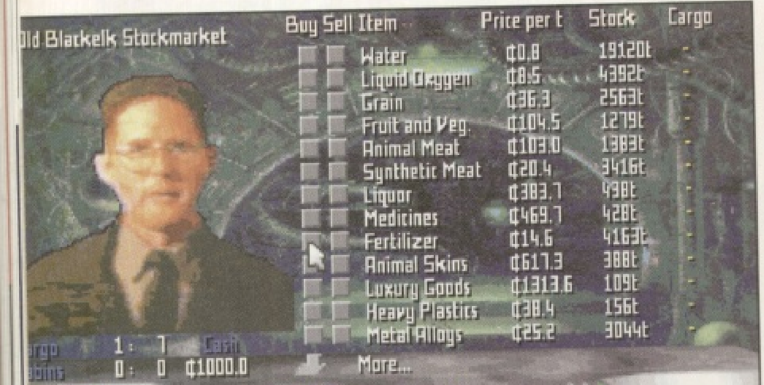
True, minor tweaks have been made here and there to improve playability — for example, when you enter a system, you can now call up a list of potential landing sites and select a destination — and there's a whole warehouse full of new equipment to purchase and a rogue's gallery of enemies to fight, including the mysterious alien Thargoids, but even so the feeling remains that this is Frontier Version 1.2 rather than a true sequel.

That's not to say that First Encounters is a bad game — certainly, if you're a newcomer to the world of Elite and Frontier then this is by far the best in the series. However, any old Frontier pros are likely to come away feeling slightly disappointed.



(Above) First Encounters' overhauled ship-to-ship combat system is much better than Frontiers', and brings back all those happy memories of the tense dogfights in the original Elite.

First Encounters still suffers from some of Frontier's old, er, 'idiosyncracies'. For instance, if you take off from London and tell the autopilot to take you to Sydney, it will wisely try and fly you through the middle of the planet. Doh!



Old Blackelk Stockmarket

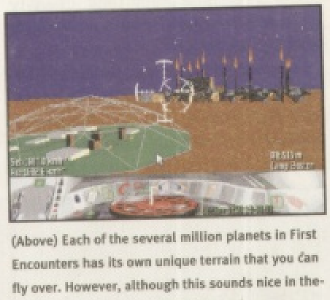
Buy	Sell	Item	Price per t	Stock	Cargo
☐	☐	Water	¢0.8	19120t	-
☐	☐	Liquid Oxygen	¢8.5	4392t	-
☐	☐	Grain	¢36.3	2563t	-
☐	☐	Fruit and Veg.	¢104.5	1279t	-
☐	☐	Animal Meat	¢103.0	1383t	-
☐	☐	Synthetic Meat	¢20.4	3416t	-
☐	☐	Liquor	¢383.7	438t	-
☐	☐	Medicines	¢469.7	428t	-
☐	☐	Fertilizer	¢14.6	4163t	-
☐	☐	Animal Skins	¢617.3	388t	-
☐	☐	Luxury Goods	¢1313.6	109t	-
☐	☐	Heavy Plastics	¢38.4	156t	-
☐	☐	Metal Alloys	¢25.2	3044t	-

rgo 1 : 7 Cash
bins 0 : 0 ¢1000.0

More...

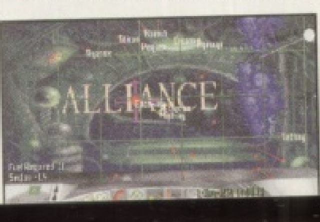
1-Jan-3250 12:00:14
Choose Buy or Sell to trade one unit

As you flit between the various areas onboard the space stations, you're greeted by an assortment of appalingly bad actors in brief animated video clips. Luckily, you can opt to turn them off.



(Above) Each of the several million planets in First Encounters has its own unique terrain that you can fly over. However, although this sounds nice in theory, in practice it's actually pretty boring.

(Below) Incoming messages are printed down in the bottom-right corner of the screen — unfortunately, however, they often obscure the icons on the control panel. It's annoying, but you get used to it.



FRONTIER: FIRST ENCOUNTERS^CD

GAMETEK/FRONTIER DEV.

(01753) 553445

£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Joystick; Sound Blaster soundcard.

THE GOOD...

- Total freedom to carve your own destiny in a vast galaxy.
- Much-improved and extremely satisfying combat system.
- The Thargoids are back — hoorah!

...AND THE BAD

- Not that different to Frontier or, indeed, Elite.
- The going can be *very* tough at first.
- The 'multimedia' enhancements are embrassingly bad, as is the sound.

Overall

84%

Now launched

fun School 5

...the best just got better!

'Fun School is back with a vengeance...brilliantly conceived, inventive and humorous...'

wrote Matthew Richards in the March issue of PC Plus

'The first thing that strikes you about Fun School in Dreamland is the quality of the program's illustration. It's gorgeous...

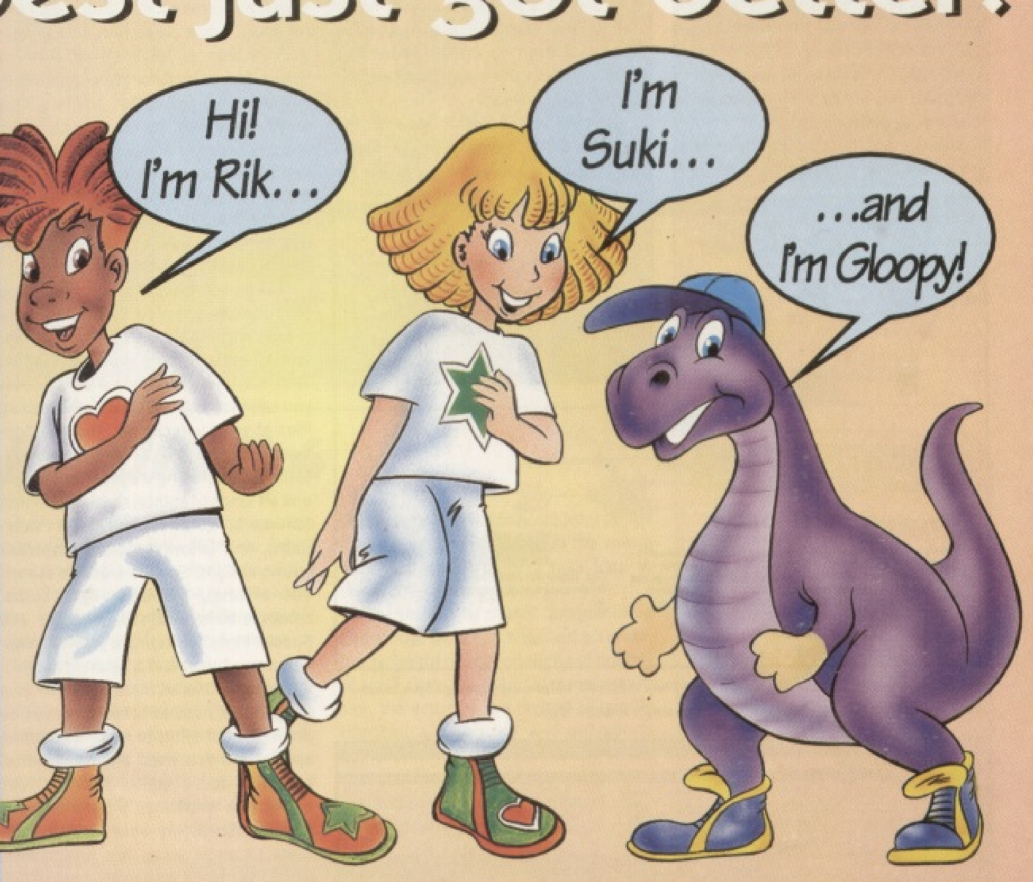
'Click one of the icons in almost any other program and you'd simply be dumped in the relevant activity. In Dreamland you're transported through a richly coloured fractal vortex that swirls into the dream of your choice.

'It all sounds slightly freaky, but the effect is stunning and is yet another step in setting the high quality tone of the program.

'The design is excellent, and there is a unique, fresh and original look to the program. Overall, it's a dream'.

PC Plus awarded Fun School in Dreamland 10 out of 10 – and gave it the coveted

PC Plus GOLD


Hi! I'm Rik...
I'm Suki...
...and I'm Gloopy!

- Three new titles are in the latest range: Fun School in Dreamland (4-7 years), Fun School in Space (6-9 years), Fun School in Time (8-11 years)
- Core subjects covered: English, maths, science, ecology and geography (five games in each pack).

Recommended retail price: **£29.99**
Available on: **PC CD Rom & Floppy**

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OVER
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FUN SCHOOL
PACKAGES
SOLD

TECH SPEC

Minimum requirements:-
386 DX 33Mhz, 4Mb RAM, 1Mb SVGA card and monitor, DOS 3.0 or above, hard disk, and MS compatible mouse.

Sound cards supported:
SoundBlaster Pro, SoundBlaster 16 and compatibles.

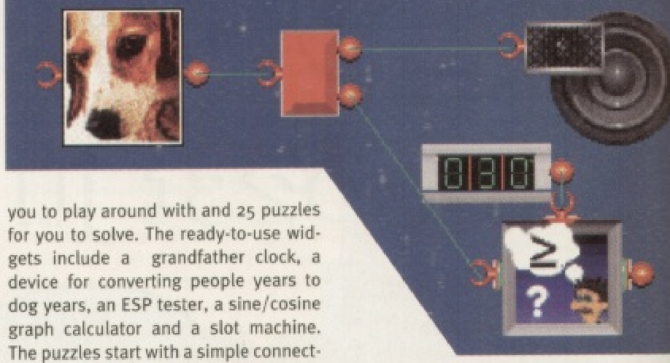
Video cards:
Cirrus Logic, Trident 8900 A/B/C, S3, Tseng 4000, Western Digital.

europress SOFTWARE

Europa House, Adlington Park,
Macclesfield, SK10 4NP
Tel: 01625 859333
Fax: 01625 879962

Widget Workshop CD

Is it a game? An educational tool maybe? Whatever it is, David Upchurch checks out Maxis' doodah.



I've never played anything like this before and I doubt that you have, either. It's not really a game, or an educational release, or a utility, or a construction set — it's all of these things put together. Maxis describe it as 'the digital equivalent of a nutty professor's laboratory', which is better than any definition I can come up with. Incidentally, if you're a nutty professor and you're reading this, please accept my apologies.

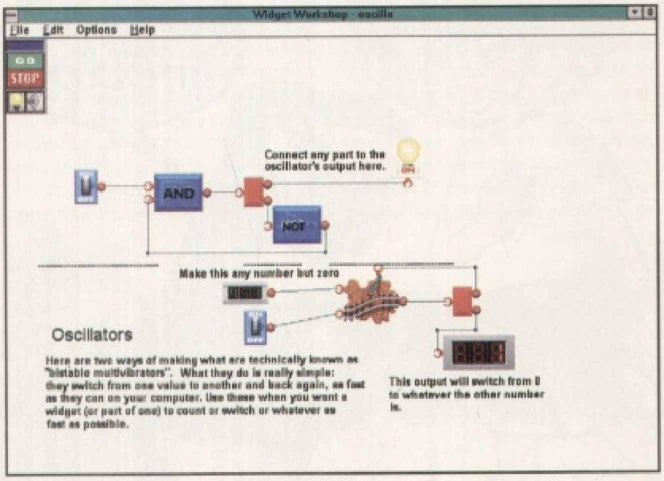
There's one thing that needs clearing up first: what exactly is a widget? Basically, it's any machine, puzzle, experiment or invention you can create using the Widget Workshop. The Workshop contains the kind of bits and pieces you might find in a Meccano set, a basic computer, a synthesiser or an electronics kit — plus a whole lot of others. What you have to do is stick the pieces together to create something that's useful, amusing, puzzling, or (preferably) all three.

To give you a better idea of the things you can create yourself, Maxis provide ten up-and-running widgets for you to play around with and 25 puzzles for you to solve. The ready-to-use widgets include a grandfather clock, a device for converting people years to dog years, an ESP tester, a sine/cosine graph calculator and a slot machine. The puzzles start with a simple connecting task which proves that white can be made by combining red, green and blue, then builds up to poem writers, a dog barking machine and a probability device based on coin-flipping.

Once you've understood what each part does and how to connect them to create successful, working machines, you're limited only by your imagination. This is a brief list of some of the tools you can play with, but it will give you an idea of what you can do: Timers (stopwatch, digital clock or metronome), Switches (including a dynamite plunger and all kinds of splitters), Number Parts (counters, totallers, AND/OR functions), text (allowing you to embellish your creation), Sounds (various assorted effects), Displays (light bulbs, colour mixers and strip charts), and Special Parts (including a gravity chamber, a pendulum and a solar system).

Once you start making your own widgets it's hard to stop. You need to put in a lot of effort to make something special and you need a fair amount of creativity and a logical brain to fully exploit the Workshop's potential, but there's also plenty here for idle dabblers to while away the hours with. Once you're pleased with your invention, you can print the design or save it to disk as a stand-alone piece of software which you can give to a friend.

None of this is as heavy or serious as it might sound. Above everything else, Widget Workshop is fun. The graphics and sound effects are amusing, and the whole package (including some bits and pieces in the box and a helpful manual) has been well designed to appeal to children. Ultimately, what you get from the Workshop depends on what you bring to it, and if you're at all turned on by experimentation and invention, the possibilities are almost endless.



Connect any part to the oscillator's output here.

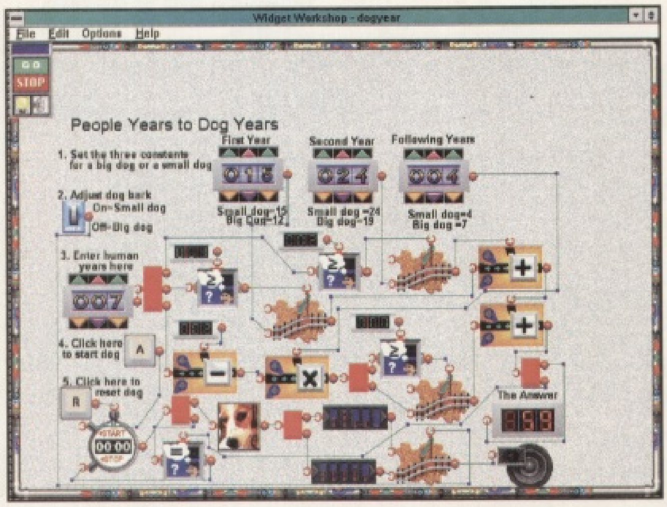
Make this any number but zero

Oscillators

Here are two ways of making what are technically known as "bistable multivibrators". What they do is really simple: they switch from one value to another and back again, as fast as they can on your computer. Use these when you want a widget (or part of one) to count or switch or whatever as fast as possible.

This output will switch from 0 to whatever the other number is.

Even without the manual and on-line help, watching how the preset widgets work can assist you in constructing your own. They also help you grasp some simple scientific ideas.



Widget Workshop's strongest feature is its quirky sense of humour. This isn't just reflected in the graphics and sound, but also in its choice of subjects, which will appeal to kids.

WIDGET WORKSHOP^CD

MAXIS/IN-HOUSE

(0171) 490 2333

£34.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 486 with 3Mb hard disk space, VGA, 4Mb RAM, Windows 3.1, mouse, double-speed CD-ROM drive.

ALSO SUPPORTS

All Windows-compatible soundcards.

THE GOOD...

- Colourful, humorous and fun.
- You can create whatever you like.
- An interesting introduction to science.

...AND THE BAD

- The subject-matter and quirky style won't appeal to everyone.
- Needs a lot of work to get significant rewards.

Overall

89%

Zig-Zag CD

Alex Simmons is stuck for words with QQP's puzzle game.

I have seen some *very* bizarre games in my time, but this surely takes the crown of the Strange But Sad Award 1995. Zig-Zag is a word game that is very difficult to describe, but here goes anyway. Running in Windows, at the top of the screen is a four-to-seven letter word which you have to guess by picking letters at random. If the chosen letter is in the word, you're awarded points so the more you score, the closer to the word you are. This wouldn't be so bad, were it not for the fact you have just a few guesses to find the right word. Do so and Captain Zig-Zag jumps up and down with glee, otherwise he'll insult you before walking off-screen.

Basically you keep hunting down letters until either you correctly guess the word and score lots of points, fail to get the find the letters before running out of space or you get so bored with the game that you go and do something interesting, like picking the fluff from your belly-button!

Personally I think the latter is more likely to occur, and I'll admit that when I first saw this game I thought that it was a budget educational title aimed at kids. But it happens, this is a full price title and is supposedly a fun game — yeah, right. Okay, so the various quest games and backdrops add some variety but in essence the game is almost exactly the same throughout.

It doesn't help that the graphics are appalling either, and for over thirty quid this really is a rip-off. I reckon you're better off stick with the games that already come with Windows, namely Minesweeper and Solitaire — they're free and are a damn sight more fun to play.

ZIG-ZAG CD

MIRAGE/QQP

(01260) 299909

£34.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive, Windows and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Sound Blaster soundcards.

THE GOOD...

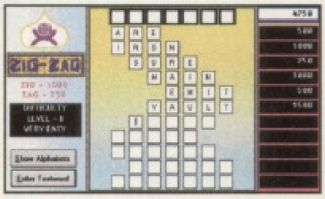
- Um, the box does make a rather attractive door stop.
- Some of the backgrounds are okay.

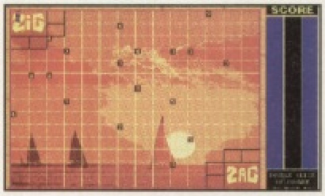
...AND THE BAD

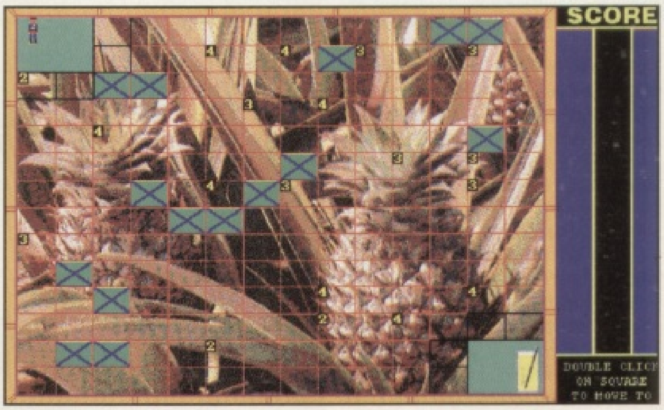
- It really is an incredibly boring game.
- £35? You've got to be joking.
- Shall I continue?

Overall

39%







HardBall 4

With just one home run in it, Alex Simmons runs for last base with Hardball 4.

Over the years, many people have tried to convert God knows how many different sports to the PC. A few have succeeded because the sport in question worked well on the home computer format, but there are many sports that don't adapt particularly well at all. Baseball is one of them. Why? Probably because of the fact that hardly anybody plays baseball in this country. Can you imagine trudging down to the local stadium to watch the Liverpool Scousers go nine innings with East Ham Cockneys? No, I didn't think so.

HardBall 4 tries extremely hard to inject life into what could easily be a dreary simulation, by using spoken commentaries from Al Michaels (who? — Dave) and also the includes all the actual playing stats of the every team in the league (although this is probably only interesting if you're American or have a fetish for numbers).

However, these features are seriously overshadowed the game's biggest flaw — the control system, which incredibly unresponsive so trying get the split-second timing needed to hit the ball AND control the direction is virtually impossible. Add to this the fact that most of the fielders are total gimps for fielders (often running in the wrong direction) and it doesn't take long to tire of this tedious sport.

Technically it's well programmed and all the facts and stats are accurate, but while there isn't enough full control of your team to call it a management sim, the action is too limited to qualify HardBall 4 as an out and out sports game. As much as I'd like to say otherwise I can only be recommend this to real baseball freaks who crave a fix of bat-swinging action.

HARDBALL 4

WARNER INTER./ACCOLADE

(0171) 391 4300

£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, SVGA, 4Mb RAM and 18Mb of hard disk.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Mouse; All major soundcards.

THE GOOD...

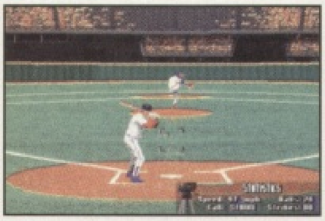
- HardBall 4's SVGA graphics really are quite superb.
- If it's a comprehensive baseball sim you're after, look no further.

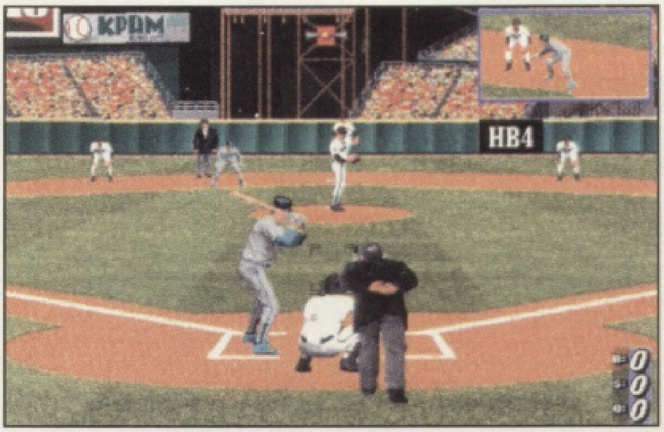
...AND THE BAD

- Unresponsive controls make it difficult to play.
- If you don't like baseball, you sure as hell won't like HardBall 4.

Overall

65%





Jagged Alliance CD

What do you get if you cross a good strategy game with a terrible combat system? David Upchurch, as ever, has the answer.

Even if you don't intend to buy this game you should read the stuff they put on the back of the box — it's a real laugh. These are just some of the claims it makes: the ultimate sight and sound extravaganza... incredible role-playing action... intense turn-based combat... heart-stopping suspense... spectacular digitized sound... frustration-free play. Surely I'm playing the wrong game? No? Oh dear.

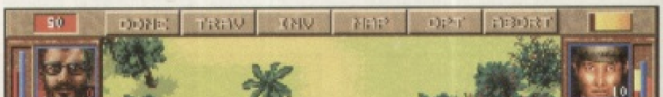
Actually, Jagged Alliance is a brilliant strategy game — or more accurately, it *could* have been a brilliant strategy game, were it not for the incredibly monotonous turn-based combat system.

But before I tear the game apart, let me just divluge the plot. The action (or rather lack of it) is set on the imaginary island of Metavira, home to the Fallow tree. This tree produces a vital (and, as it happens very valuable) medicinal sap, the supplies of which are controlled by Santino, a ruthless lunatic with a power fixation. He's prevented the sap from being exported unless he gets wads of cash in return, so it's your job to gather a gang of mercenaries to stop his plans while maintaining a steady flow of sap.

What this boils down to is a strategy game with role-playing elements, good sound and graphics and a strong sense of realism. Metavira is partitioned into sixty sectors, and when you land on the beach on Day One Santino controls fifty-nine of them. The action takes place over the next few days, during which time you have to seize control of the sectors one by one. This isn't very difficult at first, but the more territory you capture the more sap you have to worry about. It soon becomes a hectic balancing act.

You begin with a team of eight mercenaries drawn from a stock of sixty. Not all of them are willing to join at first, either because the money isn't right or they are too busy, or just because they don't think much of your reputation. These mercs are Jagged Alliance's best feature: as well as a fair spread of skills and equipment, each character has a unique personality, their own voice and their own way of responding to your commands. While most are typical gung-ho clowns, some are timid and insecure while others are aggressive. Hell, there's even the occasional spineless chicken!

Choosing the right mixture doesn't have much affect on the easiest of the three difficulty levels, but is essential if you intend to play hard. Some mercs have mechanical or medicinal skills to help with equipment repairs and wounds, while others specialize in lock-picking, gadgets, explosives and shooting. A few are smarter, healthier, more experienced, and more dexterous than the rest, but it's unlikely you'll be able to hire them from the start.

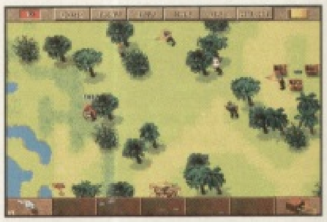


Cracking opening these crates is just one way to pick up fresh supplies. Let's hope you find some ammunition though because your stock is running frighteningly low.

Unfortunately, many of the Mercs also have serious flaws: there are a dozen or so duff marksmen, a few real dumb-heads, and a couple of characters who can't swim. However, keep them well away from the front lines and out of water and you'll be fine.

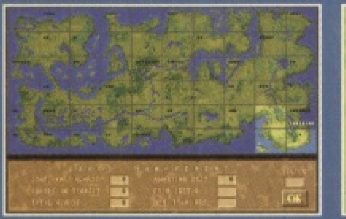
Gadget fans are well catered for, too. Apart from a predictably wide range of guns and ammo, Jagged Alliance also lets you play around with radios, explosives, gas masks, bullet-proof vests, camouflage kits, as well as all sorts of hand tools. What your merc doesn't already possess can be found concealed in crates, lying on the grass, hiding in bushes, or sneakily buried under the ground.

So it's all been good news so far, but remember the flaw I mentioned earlier, about the turn-based action at the beginning of each sector? The clumsy system works something like this: when you cross into new territory you have to click on each individual character, give him instructions, watch him walk a few yards (or whatever), and move onto the next merc. When you've finished with your team it's the computer's turn to shift Santino's henchmen around.

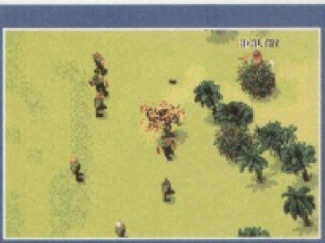


Combat is turn-based, which makes encounters with the enemy predictable, frustrating and dull.

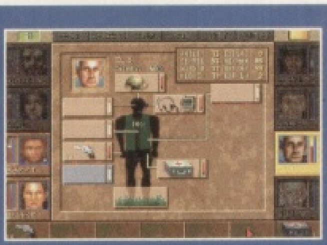
Mercs At Work



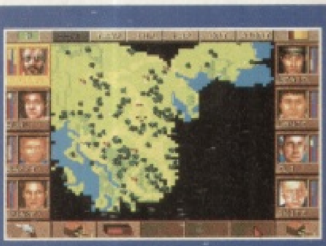
Metavira is divided into sixty sectors, all but one of which Santino controls at the start. Having made a teensy amount of progress and pumped bullets into a dozen guards, you lead your crack squad into new terrain.



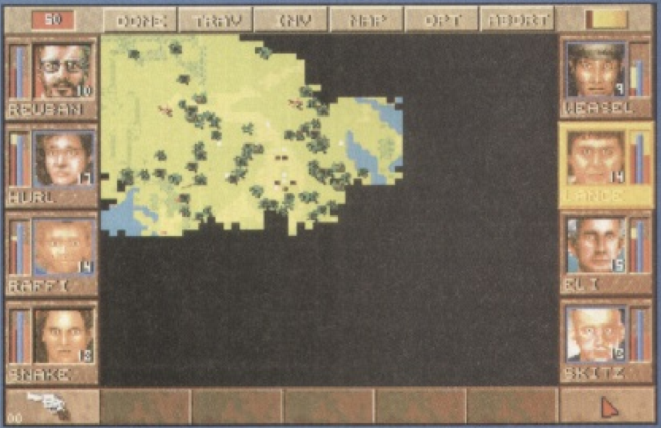
It's never very long before an enemy leaps out from the bushes and starts shooting at you. Sadly this is much less exciting than it sounds: until all your opponents are cleared from a sector the action is all turn-based.



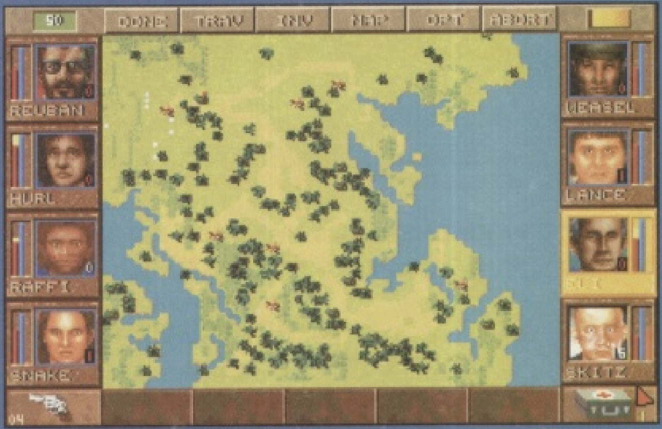
A couple of your mercenaries were wounded in the assault so it's time to check the inventory screens and find out who's got the medikits. Look after your squad and you won't need to spend money on costly replacements.



Having cleared the area of Santino's pathetic henchmen, you're free to wander at will. Make sure you comb every last inch, and keep an eye out for crates. You never know what you might find lying in the undergrowth.



As these two map views so reveal the difference between what you know is there, and what your team has discovered for themselves so far. As you can see from above, the team have seen very little so far.



Your characters are only able to interact with what they can see, whether it's an object, a building or an enemy. Judging from the map above you've uncovered the whole of the territory. Congrats!

This system is particularly frustrating and soulless during combat. The brief moments of excitement when you see an enemy emerging from the undergrowth are outweighed by tedious deployment stages in which your men are first allocated orders like chess pieces then waiting for your opponent to respond. The controls could (and should) have been far more flexible, and the inclusion of an arcade mode would have been most welcome.

Once you've cleared a sector of Santino's chums you're free to explore at will, looking for those valuable items that will come in handy later on. If the opposition has proved too strong for you, you can let the medics heal your wounded. If someone dies you can always replace them at the end of the day — but this is expensive and incredibly bad for morale.

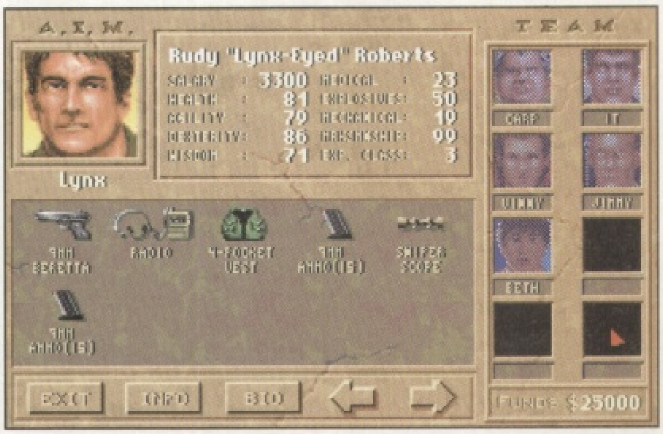
Apart from exploration and combat, the other major aspect of the game is earning cash by maintaining the production of sap. While your mercs are stabbing, blasting and hacking enemies to death, you can set tappers to work harvesting the medicine. As you gain the workers' trust more are willing to work for you, but you have to make sure they feel secure (by providing guards) and are happy with their pay. At the end of each day you find out just how badly things are going, detailed in a summary of personnel losses which picks out how many trees are under your control, along with a financial brief and an overall rating.

The action is supported by solid presentation, and while the interface is okay, manipulating inventory items can be extremely frustrating for beginners. In general the graphics are pretty good, with over 2,000 frames of animation and an interesting intro sequence, while the sound is equally impressive, thanks to some 4,000 lines of well-delivered dialogue.

As for the control system, it takes some getting used to as there are a lot of important keyboard options to remember, but it all becomes second nature and just adds to the overall depth of the game.

Overall, Jagged Alliance has a lot going for it: neatly-defined characters, three difficulty levels, save and replay options, a good manual, plenty of depth, a believable story and the potential for an engrossing challenge. The only problem is, I can't stand turn-based action. It's slow, frustrating, it ruins the atmosphere and — ultimately — it seriously marred the game for me. However, if you're the kind of person who can cope with dreay my-turn, your-turn combat you'll find a good deal to enjoy here.

But didn't the holiday brochure say they were luxury penthouse apartments?



Rudy "Lynx-Eyed" Roberts

SALARY : 3300
HEALTH : 81
AGILITY : 79
DEXTERITY: 86
WISDOM : 71
MEDICAL : 23
EXPLOSIVES: 50
MECHANICAL: 19
MARKSMANSHIP: 99
EXP. CLASS: 3

FUNDS $25000

Over sixty mercenaries can be called upon to help defeat the evil Santino. You have to choose just eight.

It's a bit like...

...Warcraft. Actually, it's like nothing else currently available, but Interplay's combination of strategy and arcade action offers something similar. Warcraft is basically a to-the-death struggle between Orcs and humans on a variety of different battlegrounds. You also get some cute voices and sound effects. And control of individual characters. And, er... that's it.

JAGGED ALLIANCE^{CD}

MINDSCAPE/MADLAB

(01444) 246333

£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 486, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive, 15mb of hard disk space and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

All major soundcards (SoundBlaster recommended for speech).

THE GOOD...

- Three difficulty levels make it suitable for all skill levels.
- All of the characters are well-defined.
- A large game map to explore and control.

...AND THE BAD

- The turn-based combat is boring.
- Searching each sector can be incredibly dull.

Overall

56%

cd updates

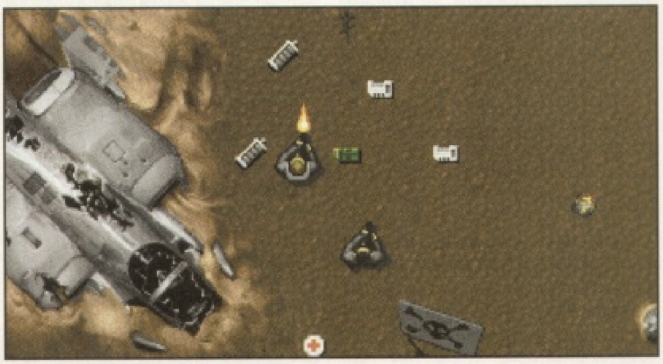
The floppy games may have been around for ages, but have you seen these all-new enhanced versions, squeezed onto CD along with FMV and stereo sound? No? Well, take a look then!

Alien Breed: Tower Assault^CD

Gradually building up to their PC-specific debut this Autumn, Team 17 are continuing to release conversions of old Amiga games, the latest being a CD version of the excellent blaster, Alien Breed: Tower Assault.

Essentially a direct port from the CD32 game, it's pretty much the same as virtually any other Alien Breed game in that the action is viewed from above and that you control either one or two gung-ho colonial space marines, rock 'ard geezers whose idea of fun is wiping out the streams of insect-like aliens that plague each of the colony levels they stumble across.

In terms of gameplay they don't come much simpler than this — all you need to survive the onslaught is nifty joypad skills and a quick trigger finger. Of course, one of the many gun power-ups would also increase your chances of survival, as will the numerous bonus and energy top-ups that are scattered throughout each stage.



Alien Breed: Tower Assault features over 50 levels of alien-packed mayhem, and because each stage has multiple exits the game is far from linear and can be completed in many different ways. There are also a host of new enemies to tackle on top of the usual alien 'soldiers' and Face-Huggers — cocoon aliens and invisible beasties are just some of the more deadly enemies the two heroes face during the uphill battle to recapture the research centre on Azarin 2E.

Best played on a joypad or stick (although the keyboard controls aren't too awkward), the CD version comes complete with a five-minute intro (which is on the whole very good, apart from some *very* dodgy acting) plus 17 bonus levels, taken from the original Alien Breed 2.

Although simplistic, both visually and in terms of gameplay, Alien Breed: Tower Assault is a fun shoot-'em-up that is perfect for a few hours of mindless blasting. What's more, you don't need a powerful PC to run it.

TEAM 17/EAST POINT
(01924) 267776
£34.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC
25MHz 386, VGA, 2Mb RAM and CD-ROM drive.

ALSO SUPPORTS
Joystick; joypad; Sound Blaster and Gravis UltraSound soundcards.

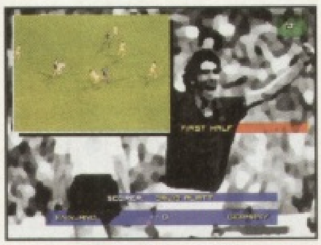
Overall 79%

Football Glory^CD

The resemblance between Football Glory and Sensible Soccer is quite astonishing. The pitch is identical, the goals are remarkably similar and even the tiny players look as though they've been nabbed from Sensi. In fact, it's virtually impossible to tell the two games apart, until you actually sit down and play them.

While Football Glory looks the same as Sensible Soccer, the gameplay is nowhere near as intuitive or even as addictive for that matter. Football Glory is packed with more features than Sensi though, including a selection of spectacular moves including bicycle kicks and back heels, as well as the (initially) amusing animations like pitch invaders and streakers. These soon become tiresome though, and interrupt the fluidity of the gameplay which rapidly becomes incredibly frustrating.

In addition to the standard game, the CD version is packed with digitised video footage, and while it's fuzzy and the screen is small, it does help create a better grandstand atmosphere. Mind you, although the cutscenes are okay, they're still not good enough to patch over the sluggish gameplay. It maybe a competent soccer sim, but Football Glory pales into insignificance against the mighty Sensible Soccer.



BLACK LEGEND/CROTEAM
(01438) 840004
£24.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC
33MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM and CD-ROM drive.

ALSO SUPPORTS
Joystick; Sound Blaster soundcards

Overall 69%

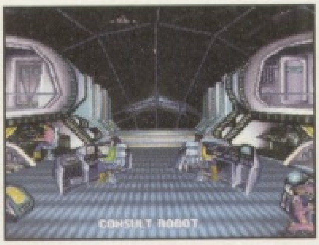
Alien Legacy^CD

Alien Legacy was first released on floppy last year at around the same time as Outpost. Both games are very similar in that you're given a planet and a handful of colonists with which to extract ores and create space stations on lifeless alien worlds.

Using the ores to construct buildings and increase the size of your home base, Alien Legacy is very much like SimCity on the moon. Providing the colonists are kept happy, there's no reason why your HQ won't eventually blossom and evolve into a sprawling space metropolis...

...Until the aliens arrive, that is. You see, the indigenous lifeforms don't really like us humans invading, so expect the odd hostile visit from some xenomorphs throughout your struggle to become the galactic ruler.

Essentially the same as the floppy version, Alien Legacy CD does have a couple of enhancements, these mainly affecting the game's presentation (there is now over 4 hours of digitised speech, as well as an excellent soundtrack and rendered cutscenes), leaving the gameplay pretty much untouched. Still, this is not so much of a problem, as Alien Legacy is still the same user-friendly and highly-involving space strategy game it always was.



SIERRA/YBARRA PROD.
(01734) 303322
£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC
20MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD drive, 7Mb of hard disk space and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS
Sound Blaster, Ad Lib, Pro Audio Spectrum and Gravis soundcards.

Overall 83%

Budget Reviews

As we all know money is all-too tight in the recession-struck 90s, so why not check out this month's budget reviews to see what's just had the cut-price treatment. You'll be pleasantly surprised...

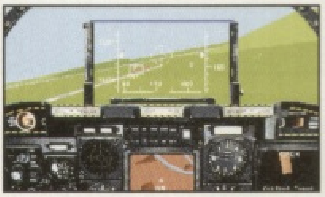
Aces: The Complete Collector's Edition^{CD}

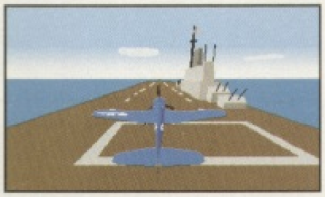
This is an odd collection. Most of the games here are about as fresh as a dead ferret, the graphics look extremely ropy compared to recent similar releases, the sound effects are unimpressive — and yet this is one of the better flight sim compilations around. Why?

There are two reasons. First, the four simulations — A-10 Tank Killer, Aces Over Europe, Aces Over The Pacific and Red Baron — are well programmed, offer a wide variety of options, let you fly loads of planes and give you plenty of missions. Second, the games have been packaged along with a neat little Windows-based utility called The Aviation Pioneers, which is basically a reference document providing background information about the early days of flight.

A-10 Tank Killer is arguably the weakest of the bunch. You have a choice of three mission sets, two in Central Europe and one in the Middle East during the Gulf War, adding up to just over twenty missions in total. Unfortunately, the graphics and sound aren't too clever, and despite the inclusion of many standard flight simulation features (multiple views, campaign option, comms link to other pilots), it's still a bit disappointing.

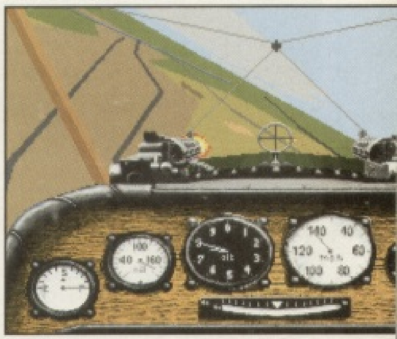
The two 'Aces' games on offer boast the most impressive technology. Aces of the Pacific was released almost three years ago but is still very playable. It's based on the air struggle between the US and Japan during World War Two, and gives you around two dozen different planes to fly for both sides. Aces Over Europe is the most recent of the four games and compares well with current releases, letting you fly as a pilot for the US Air Force, the RAF or the Luftwaffe in a series of campaigns or individual missions. What's more, it also builds actual World War Two events into the action.





Red Baron is the pick of the crop. It can't compete with the others in terms of speed or fire-power, but for raw action it's unbeatable. Set during World War One, it allows you to go on single missions, engage in a dogfight with a famous ace or launch a career in one of the services. You also get the Red Baron Mission Builder free.

Aces doesn't really offer the most stunning flight sim technology or indeed astound you with its sound effects, but having said that it has a lot going for it. All the games are well constructed and offer plenty of action, and they're all supported by excellent on-line Windows manuals and the interesting Aviation Pioneers utility. Unless you're a complete snob about graphics, you should try it.



SIERRA/DYNAMIX

(01734) 303322

£39.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

25MHz 486, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive, Windows 3.1, 12Mb hard disk space and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Joystick; All major soundcards.

Overall 77%

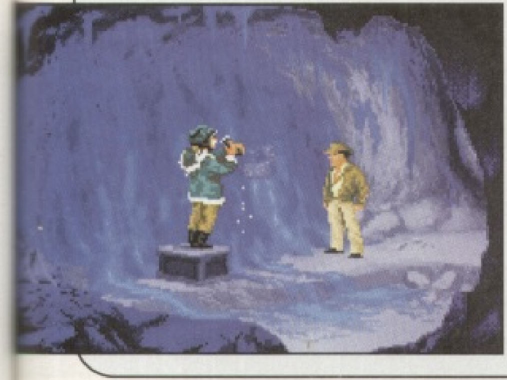
Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis

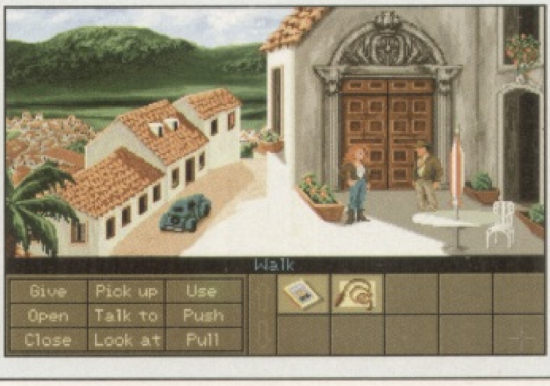
Let's face it, LucasArts' reputation amongst adventurers is quite simply second-to-none. Over the last decade or so they've continually proved that graphic adventures can be made simpler, funnier and better looking, with ground-breaking releases such as Maniac Mansion, Zak McKracken, Monkey Islands 1 and 2, Loom, Day of the Tentacle and their last release, Sam and Max Hit the Road.

Then there are the two Indy games. The first, Indiana Jones and The Last Crusade, closely followed the plot of the eponymous film, but Fate of Atlantis is a unique, stand-alone story. Once again Indy is in competition with the devious Nazis, who are trying to find a precious metal ore known as Orichalcum which apparently exists only in Atlantis. If they manage to mine enough of it before Indy can intervene, they'll construct a bomb powerful enough to bring every nation on Earth to its knees.

So much for the story. What's really important are the interface and the strength of the puzzles. Although the interface looks a tad outdated compared to LucasArts' more recent efforts, it's still easy to use and very flexible, allowing you to concentrate on problem-solving. The puzzles, on the other hand, are the only minor gripe with the game. They won't offer a serious challenge to experienced adventurers but the number and variety of puzzles, coupled with three alternatives routes to the ultimate goal, ensure long-term appeal.

Despite showing its age a little (the graphics and sound are somewhat less impressive than they were when this was first released almost three years ago), Fate of Atlantis is still a brilliant game. It's great fun, packed full with humour, and has a story that will grip you from right from the start to the very finish. If you haven't played it before, now is the time.





KIXX XL/LUCASARTS

(0121) 606 1800

£16.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

286, VGA, 1Mb RAM, 10Mb hard disk space and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Joystick, All major soundcards.

Overall 88%

Syndicate/UFO: Enemy Unknown CD

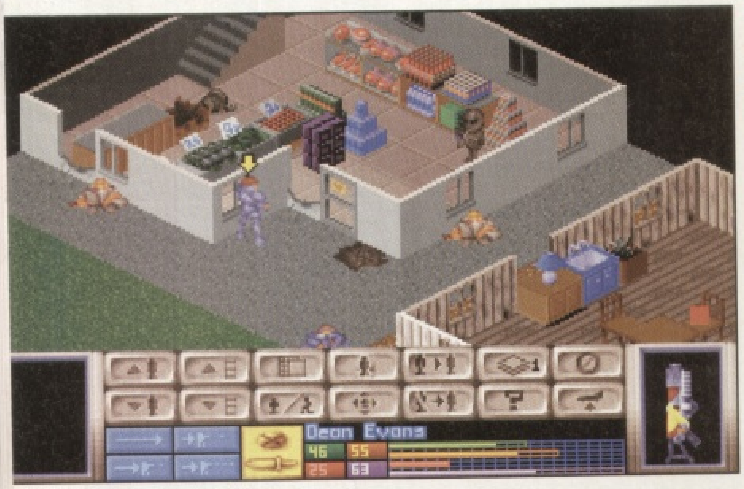
Telstar continue their excellent double value games range with this superlative compilation, containing Bullfrog's award-winning Syndicate and MicroProse's excellent strategy game, UFO: Enemy Unknown. What's more, it's only a mere 40 quid so what are you waiting for, go and buy it! Eh? You want to know what the games are about? Okay then...

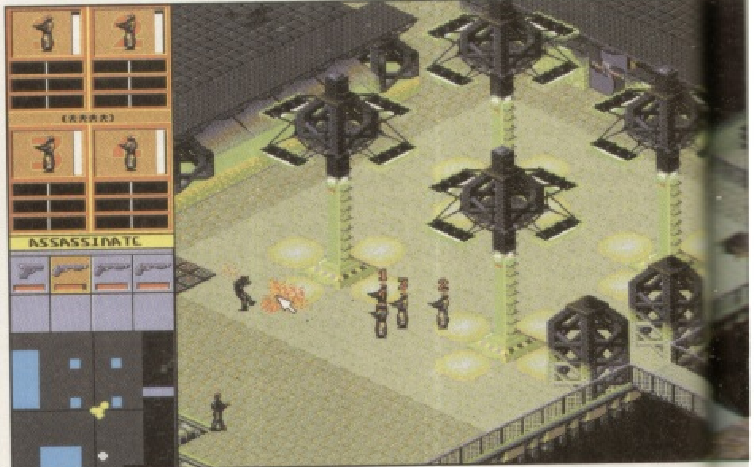
Syndicate is an ultra-violent blast set in the bleak future. Gigantic corporations now rule the globe, battling it out against each other to gain total control of the hi-tech memory implant known as CHIP. Apparently more stimulating than any drug, the company selling CHIPs literally has the world at its feet (a bit like McCain and their globally renowned oven chips, I suppose), so the big execs don't even think twice about sending in a squad of heavily armed and armoured cyborgs to wipe the competition out.

You control one of these squads, comprising of four 'borgs equipped with as much equipment and weaponry as you can afford. Selecting one of over 50 territories from around the world, simply locate your primary target and destroy it using mini-guns, flamethrowers, rocket launchers... you name it, you've got access to it.

However, it's not all that simple, as rival syndicates have similar cyborg teams working for them so expect strong resistance along the way. Mission objectives aren't always locate-and-destroy sorties either, as often you'll have to capture enemy scientists using mind controllers and use their knowledge to increase the performance of your cyborgs and so on.

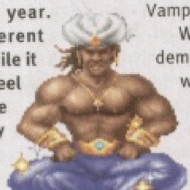
As well as the original missions, the CD also contains a load of new objectives which first saw the light of day on the American Revolt add-on disk. These extra missions are *extremely* difficult and should only be attempted having conquered the rest of the world first, although the ten specially designed multi-player scenarios should suit just about any player. You'll need access to a network to enjoy the excellent 8-player game though, in which it's an all-





Three Worlds Of AD&D CD

Dark Sun: Shattered Lands, Ravenloft: Strahd's Possession and Al-Qadim: The Genie's Curse. Two of the three titles (the latter two) will bring a smile to the face and a moistness to the pants of many an RPGer as both enjoyed critical acclaim when they originally released over a year. Dark Sun is a totally different kettle of fish though, and while it was fairly well received it feel considerably short of the mark due to it's hefty fifty asking price. But look, Mindscape have bundled ALL three together and attached a rather attractive ú45 price tag for the lot! Bargain!



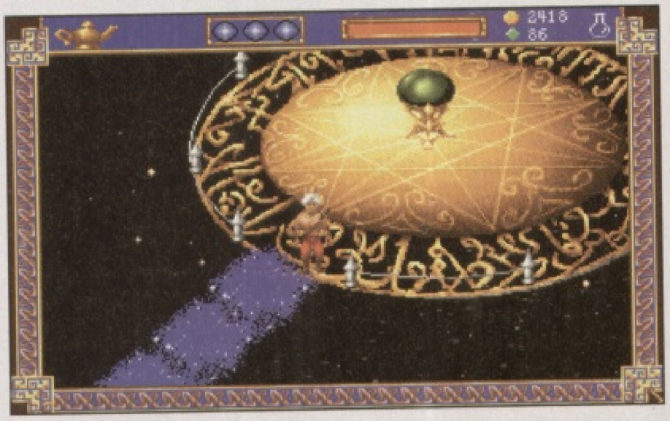
Of the three titles, Ravenloft is arguably the best. It combines slick, atmospheric 3D graphics and fantastic character interaction to provide a stiff challenge to both old and new AD&D fans alike. The graphic style is very similar in vein to Doom, and this works surprisingly well in a role-playing environment. The player takes control of four characters (two to start off with) and has to defeat the evil King of Barovia, a long-toothed git Strahd who to be a Vampyre (uh-oh).

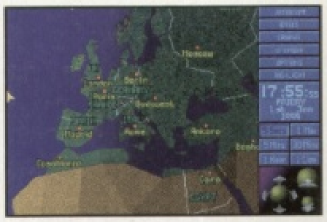
While hacking away at the demonic creatures of the night with various weapons is fun, Ravenloft's most impressive feature is the vast size of the playing area — it's enormous, and is filled with traps, ghouls, spells and loads of other goodies that will either help or hinder the player during their quest.

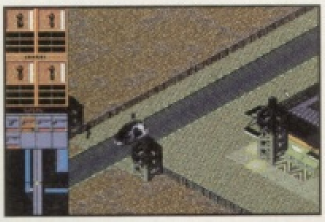
Next up is Al-Qadim: The Genie's Curse, a mammoth top-down RPG set in the blistering sun and sand of the desert. Assuming control of the Al Hazrad, you must explore your home town of Zaratan and eventually the entire realm to discover what has happened to his pet Genie (why can't some people be happy with a Yorkshire Terrier?) and find out why a horde of the mystical buggers have attacked the ship of the Desert King Caliph. Unfortunately for little Al Hazrad, he's been framed for the foul deed because he possesses a Genie (apparently they can only be controlled by their owners), so the over task of the game is to set out and clear his family name.

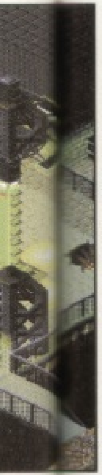
In terms of gameplay Al-Qadim is an arcade adventure similar in style to Zelda, so therefore the gameplay is biased towards hackin' good action rather than in-depth role-playing. Surprisingly though, this mixture works well and combined with the defined by rather simplistic graphics, it's not a bad little game at all.

Last of all, we have Dark Sun: Shattered Lands which really is the only weak(ish) link in the chain. To be quite honest it's a mediocre game, with









against-all fight to the death.

Likewise, UFO: Enemy Unknown is a simply brilliant game which, when it was released just over a year ago, was sadly overlooked by many because it literally appeared out of nowhere. To recap, it's an astonishingly absorbing turn-based strategy game in which man and alien fight it out across assorted terrain types from across the globe.

Assuming command of Xcom, a secret organisation assigned to extra terrestrial activities, the aliens have invaded earth and it's down to your bunch of hapless marines to send 'em packing back to Mars. Using an isometric-3D Laser Squad-style view to portray the conflict, each of the marines has a certain number of action points with which to move and fire. Equipped with an varied selection of weapons, although the objectives for specific missions may be slightly different, in essence all you have to do is obliterate the enemy using brute force.

As usual, it's not quite that easy as the alien force is often overwhelming, but the intuitive interface makes this task less difficult as it allows you to control your team quickly and with ease. The turn based combat may not suit everyone though, but if you can hack it (which I'm sure most of you can) you'll find UFO: Enemy Unknown arguably one of the best strategy games. Bundled with Syndicate, it's an absolute bargain. There, I told you to go and buy it!

TELSTAR

(01932) 222232

£39.99 OUT NOW

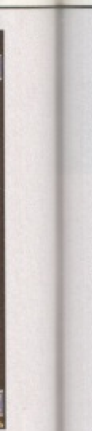
MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM Drive and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

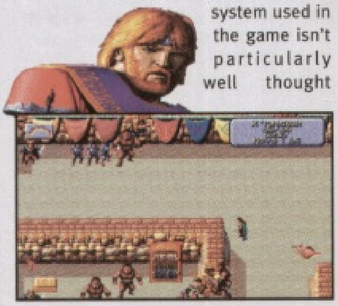
Sound Blaster and Roland soundcards.

Overall 89%



average graphics and sound wrapped around a game engine that SSI hail as 'the new generation of AD&D RPGs'. That could well have been true around its release 18 months ago but now it pails into insignificance when compared against the likes of Origin's excellent Ultima 8.

Anyway, you play a gladiator left to rot in a city ruled by some mad fella called Tectuktitlay (where do they get these names from?). You live to kill or be killed so your few pleasure in life are simple, a damp cloth to wipe the blood from your sword being one of them. To cut a long story short, you must escape from the city and proceed to explore the surrounding countryside, building your team up to four by interacting with other characters as you explore. As with most AD&D games though, Dark Sun relies far too heavily on combat and the system used in the game isn't particularly well thought out — rather than carefully planning your attack you may as well just charge in and hope for the best.



While both Ravenloft and Al-Qadim are notable role-playing games, they are neither outstanding or particularly impressive. However, ú45 represents excellent value for all three if you're into this style of game, but then again if you adore RPGs the likelihood of already owning one of the three is extremely high.

To sum up, this is well worth considering if you don't possess any of the three games, otherwise it may be worthwhile seeking out the individual titles you want and not wasting cash on a game you already own.

MINDSCAPE/SSI

(01444) 246333

£44.99 OUT NOW

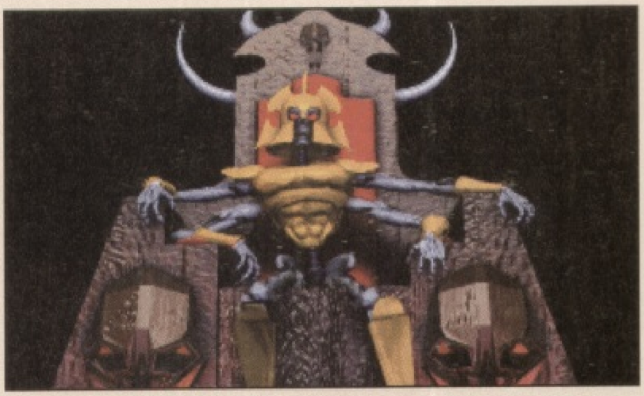
MINIMUM SPEC

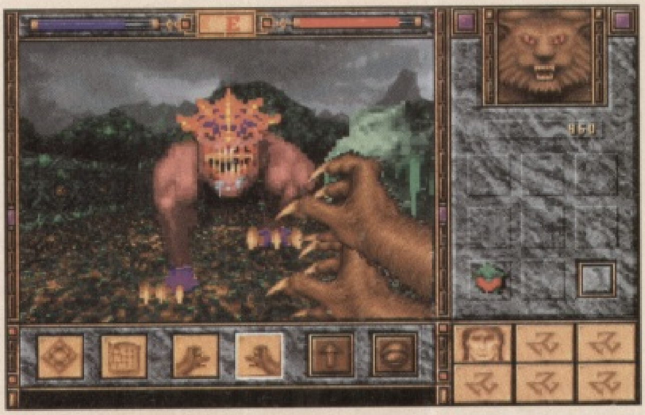
386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive, 27 Mb hard disk space and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Sound Blaster, Adlib, Roland and Gravis Ultrasound soundcards.

Overall 81%





Shadowcaster^{CD}

Shadowcaster was first collaboration between Raven and Id Software (Heretic being the second), and is more of a role-playing game than the likes Doom but is still a far cry from Ultima Underworlds I and II. Why? Armed with a sword, axe or just about any other sharp-edged weapon, your quest is to explore the dungeons in search of some evil shapechanger called Veste. This is done by romping through the darkness, hacking away at just about anything that wanders across your path. No dice-rolling or anorak-wearing here then.

But while it leans towards Doom's style of brutal gameplay, one of Shadowcaster's most unique features is that the lead character, Kirt, also happens to be a shapechanger and during the game can morph into any one of five forms, including a four-armed cat beastie, an aquatic frogman and even a fire demon that can fly through the air! Each of these creature can use the usual array of hand-held weapons as well as dabble in magic, firing off lighting bolts, plasma blasts and such like to zap the hordes of vicious creatures that attack throughout the game.

Each of the sprawling texture-mapped dungeons is packed with simplistic puzzles to solve (pressing buttons in order to open doors and so on), but unlike Doom each level is completely stair-free and is essentially flat as a pancake (apart from the fact you can fly) so you don't really get the three-dimensional feeling of Id's super-shooter. Mind you, with a total of 27 dungeons to explore, it'll take more than just a couple of hours to walk through this monster.

However, because it's only a one-player game it lacks the long term appeal of, say, Heretic, with it's network link facilities. It's also not as involving as Ultima Underworld, so while it might look substantially better and it's initially great fun to play there's not enough meaty gameplay to ensure you'll be coming back to this baby in months to come. Still, for £10 it's a very reasonable purchase indeed.

ELECTRONIC ARTS/ORIGIN

(01753) 549442

£9.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM SPEC

33MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive, 5Mb of hard disk space and mouse.

ALSO SUPPORTS

Sound Blaster soundcards.

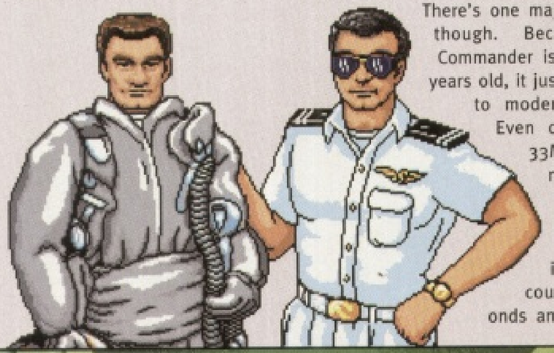
Overall 82%

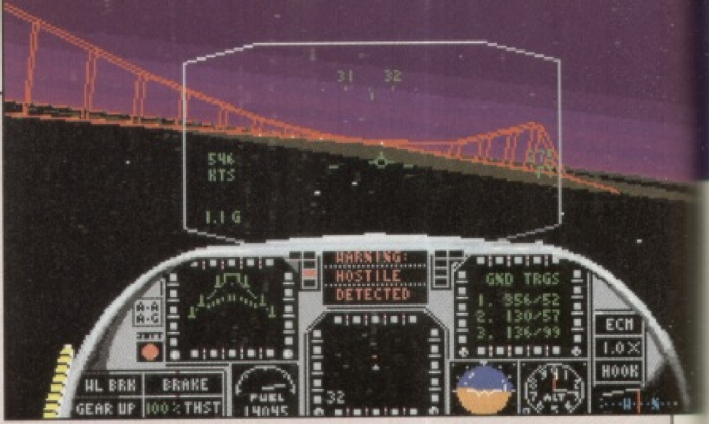
Mile High Club^{CD}

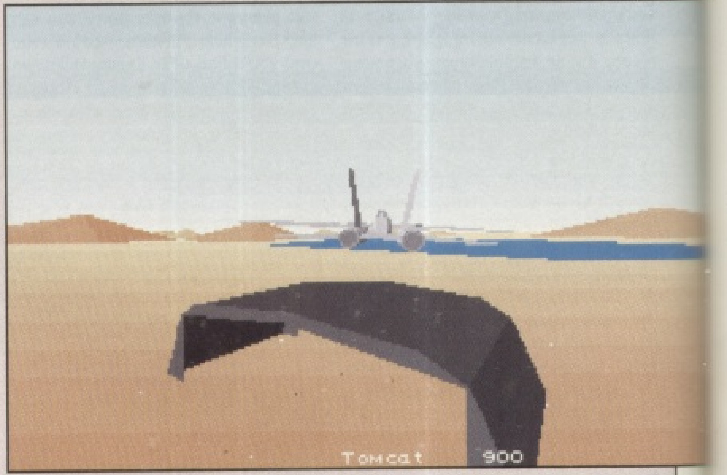
Eight games for fifty quid? Sounds like a bargain, eh? Well it isn't. Most of the games on this compilation are pretty mediocre, and of the two or three decent ones that remain there are better rivals currently available. So is there any point at all in reading the rest of this review? There is, if you want to discover why Mile High Club might just be worth a look.

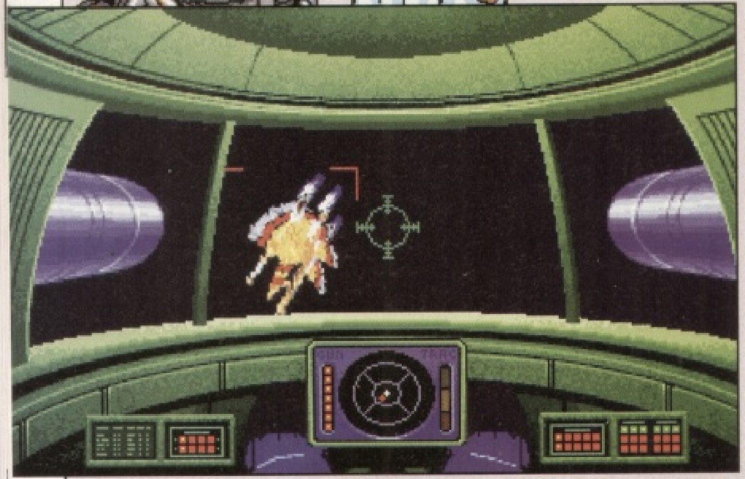
The theme that binds the collection together is 'simulation'. You get a total of six flight sims (Jetfighter II, F14 Tomcat, The Heroes of the 357th, MiG-29, ATAC and Megafortress) and two space combat sims (Wing Commander and Wing Commander Academy). Most of these are at least three years old, which means that if you own a 486DX or better you know that your machine can cope with much more impressive graphics and sound. Age isn't a problem if the gameplay is up-to-scratch, but this really isn't the most addictive group of simulations around.

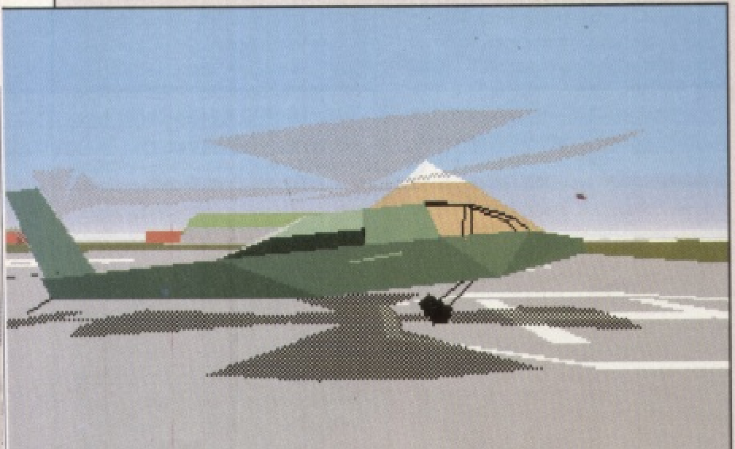
In case you've forgotten or simply never knew what each game is about, here's a brief list. Wing Commander was hailed as a classic on its release and is still an appealing 3D space combat/strategy game. Even so, the graphics and sound are nothing special by today's standards and the action is a bit linear and arcade-biased. There's one major drawback though. Because Wing Commander is around five years old, it just isn't suited to modern day PCs. Even on a decent 33MHz 486 it runs ridiculously fast, the intro flicking past in a just a couple of seconds and the spaceship being so responsive it almost uncontrollable. Wing Commander Academy is slightly better in this sense as it's more demaning on your machine, but while it is much more flexible than it's forefather, this sequel otherwise has very little else to offer.











Four of the six flight sims won't cause you to slaver, roll your eyes and writhe on the ground in excitement. F14 Tomcat was the only dedicated F14 simulator when it was first released, but even then it offered average gameplay with crude presentation. Domark's MiG-29 was, is and probably always will be a tedious game whose only merit is its focus on Russian hardware. Jetfighter II, the attractive sequel to one of the first decent flight sims, is now looking pretty wrinkly and is a bit too bland to keep you hooked, while Megafortress is a rather turgid B-52 simulation with blocky graphics, although it does go into the kind of incredible detail which some of you may find rewarding.

The two good games here are Heroes of the 357th and ATAC. Heroes stands up fairly well against the competition even now, with plenty of views, 34 missions, an auto-replay feature and strong presentation. It suffers from having only one plane — the P-51 Mustang — and an auto take-off and landing feature though. ATAC has an unusual scenario (gathering intelligence on enemy activities in the year 2003) and offers a strategy-only option for those who don't feel like flying. It's realistic, exciting and is still okay even by today's standards.

Mile High Club is by no means a great compilation because the mediocre stuff casts a miserable shadow over what's left. Even so, if any of the two or three good games here appeal to you then take a look. If not, or if you already have some of them, I recommend you buy one of the more recent flight sims instead.

ELITE/VELOCITY

(01922) 55852

£49.99 OUT NOW

MINIMUM **SPEC**

25MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive and mouse.

ALSO **SUPPORTS**

Joystick; All major soundcards.

Overall 71%

Yours... for less than a Fiver

Can Apogee possibly better Rise of the Triad? Yes, and they have done with their awesome Descent-cum-Magic Carpet tribute, Terminal Velocity.

Terminal Velocity

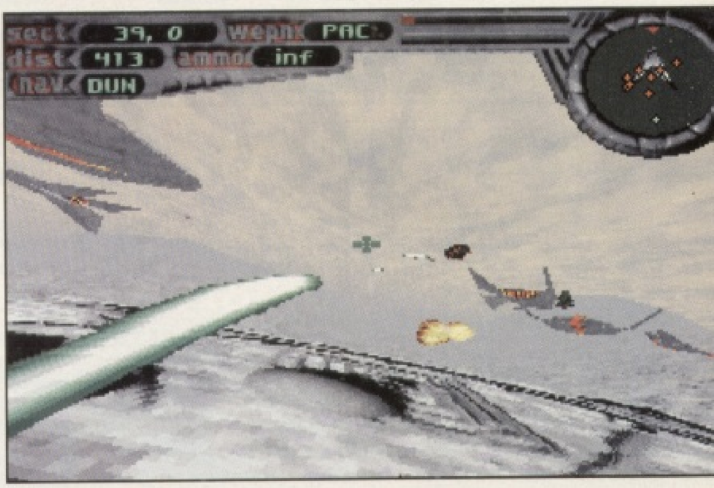
Apogee

Having blitzed the bulletin boards with their brilliant Doom-alike, Rise of the Triad, Apogee return with possibly their finest game yet, Terminal Velocity. It's a graphically stunning shoot-'em-up similar in style to Magic Carpet, but rather than skimming along the treacharous terrain on a rug you zip through the misty skies in a hi-tech fighter spacecraft.

Terminal Velocity is the first in Apogee's 3D Realms series, and uses their brilliant new game engine to great effect. Like Magic Carpet or indeed Descent, you're completely free to fly wherever you want, skimming through the deep trench-like canyons and soaring high up over the snow-capped mountains. Flying a TV-202 fighter, you're the lone pilot who's been assigned to fend off the invading alien gits who are (unsurprisingly) planning to take over the earth.

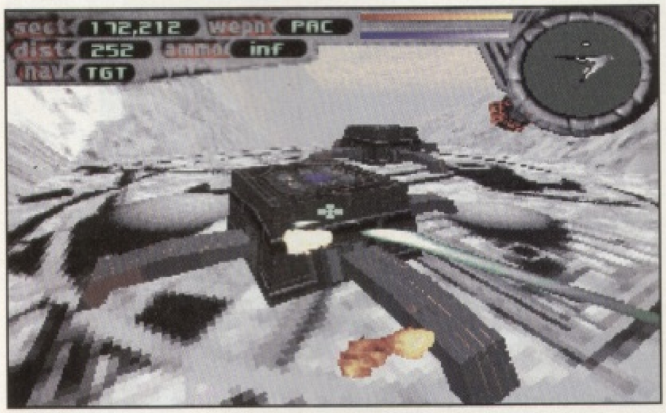
Ultimately this means protecting your home planet from these Xenomorph intruders, but during this shareware slice you only get to tackle the first of three scenarios, titled Tactical Strike. Set over the barren ice plains of Barnard's Star, the aliens have already constructed huge defence installations and refineries to extract precious ores from the ground, so it's these massive buildings that are effectively the primary objectives for each of your missions.

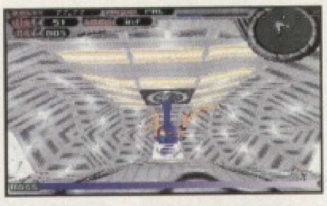
Equipped with a rapid-firing laser cannon, these vast enemy encampments are easily destroyed providing you concentrate your fire, chipping away at their tough armoured exteriors before they eventually explode in a ball of flame. If you're lucky a bonus will be left floating amidst the smoke and debris, usually restoring energy to the ship's shields or topping up the afterburner fuel. Occasionally weapon power-ups can be found, transforming your puny pea-shooter into a meaty alien fragger.

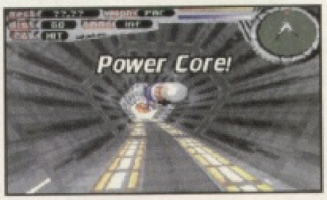


No matter what size gun the ship carries, it's not going to stop the enemy ships from swarming through the skies. There's hundreds of the damn things, weaving through the canyons, taking pot-shots at your fighter. They can be destroyed with just a single hit (on the easiest difficulty level, of which there are four in all), but targeting them is not quite so simple.

As well as the snowy exterior terrain, you can also dive inside tunnels that stretch underground. Plagued by moving hatchways and other obstacles, many of these Descent-like passages simply contain bonuses, although the final tunnel leads to a huge robotic guardian that fires off endless streams of electricity bolts. Attacking the beast is similar to destroying the power generators in Interplay's excellent blaster, but having defeated the level boss you're free to fly to the next stage...







Well, you would be if this were the complete game, due for release this Summer from US Gold. For the time being you'll just have to make do with the excellent 3-mission shareware demo, which also includes serial link and network facilities for the ultimate multi-player blast. You'll need a decent 486 PC to get this baby running though, but believe me, it's well worth it. Scour those bulletin boards now and get it while it's hot!

- **Contact: CompuServe BBS (0171) 490 8881.**

OVERALL 91%

Where can I get this lovely **Shareware?**

If you're on the look-out for Shareware, here's a list of just some of the friendly and helpful Shareware libraries that you might like to try. Why not ask them to send you a catalogue of their games, or alternatively check this very magazine for adverts.

Transend Services BBS (01274) 622228
Transend Services Ltd (01274) 620536
Testware UK Ltd (01423) 886415
PD Soft (01702) 466933

Note that Shareware libraries often charge different prices for the same games, so always remember to shop around to find the best deal.

Also, remember that you'll usually pay by the disk, not by the individual game. This means that if one disk costs, say, £2 then a game like Raptor (which comes on a total of three disks) will set you back £6. Postage & Packing is normally included and, if it isn't, go somewhere where it is.

Rather than scouring the libraries for shareware, if you've got a modem why not try giving the following BBS systems a call. Initial on-line time is free but for more access most systems will charge you a small annual subscription fee.

After Hours BBS (01785) 228214
On-Line BBS (01839) 661199/88/77

As ever, the games featured here and a whole lot more are available on Compuserve and on the increasingly popular Internet.

Going on-line with **CompuServe**

If you have a PC and suitable communications software, then you can log onto CompuServe immediately. CompuServe's London dial-up node accepts all modem speeds up to 14,400bps and can be reached by dialing (0171) 490 8881. Simply dial this number and then type in the following responses to the system requests (shown on the left):

HOST NAME:	CIS
USER ID:	177000,5606
PASSWORD:	EXPLORE/WORLD
AGREEMENT NUMBER:	UKPCGAME
SERIAL NUMBER:	93006

If you have any problems, simply call CompuServe's Freephone helpline on (0800) 289458.

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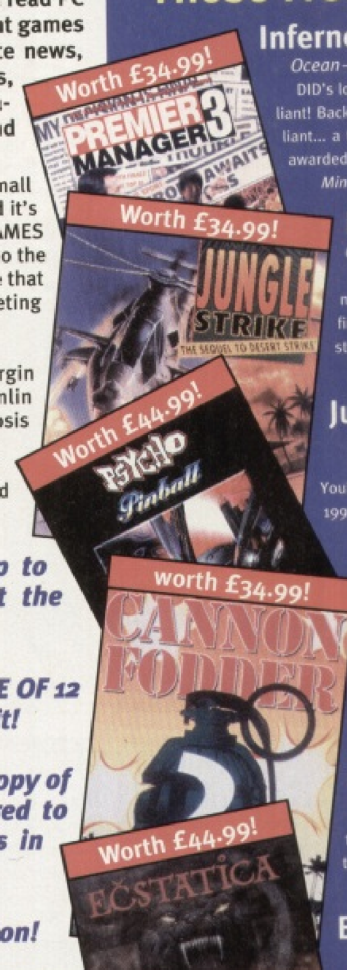

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Ocean — Available on CD only!

DID's long-awaited sci-fi extravaganza is here — and it's brilliant! Back in our October 1994 Issue we reckoned it was "brilliant... a true, cinematic space opera on a massive scale," and awarded it a whopping 92%!

Min specs: 25MHz 486, VGA, 4Mb RAM and CD drive.

INFERNO
OCEAN
Worth £44.99!

Premier Manager 3

Gremlin — Available on both HD & CD!

The Premier Manager success story shows no signs of stopping in this, the series' third and finest incarnation. We gave it 91% in our April 1995 Issue and stated: "Premier Manager 3 is a superb game that will keep you occupied for months."

Min specs: 25MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM and mouse.

Jungle Strike

Gremlin — Available on both HD & CD!

Take to the skies — and the ground too this time! — in the excellent sequel to Desert Strike. You'll need brains as well as brawn to defeat the evil terrorist plot to nuke the States. In the May 1995 Issue we proclaimed it "one of the most captivating blasts of late" and awarded it 81%!

Min specs: 33MHz 386, VGA and 2Mb RAM.

Psycho Pinball

Codemasters — Available on both HD & CD!

Bring home all the excitement of the arcades with this excellent simulation of the noble art of pinball. As we said in our April 1995 Issue when we awarded it 90%, Psycho Pinball is "immensely addictive" and "simply the best 'pinny' game on the PC".

Min specs: 25MHz 386, VGA and 4 Mb RAM.

(Please note that you must pay an additional £5 if you select this game.)

Cannon Fodder 2

Virgin — Available on HD only!

If you thought you'd won the war when you finished the original Cannon Fodder, then think again. Yes, those tiny little blokes with gun are back, ready and willing to tackle their toughest missions yet. We awarded the original 92%, and this sequel is just as good.

Min specs: 25MHz 386, VGA and 2Mb RAM.

Ecstatica

Psygnosis — Available on CD only! You must be over 18 to order this game!

Just when you thought no-one could top Infogrames' superb Alone In The Dark games, along comes Ecstatica from Psygnosis, a super-spooky 3D adventure set in a town bedevilled by werewolves and minotaurs. In our January 1995 Issue we reckoned Ecstatica was "one of the most exciting and innovative games of the year", and gave it 92%!

Min specs: 33MHz 386, VGA, 4Mb RAM and CD drive.

** Excepting Psycho Pinball — please add £5 to the subscription price if you select this game (i.e. the UK subscription price of the HD Disk Edition of PC GAMES becomes £52.40 instead of £47.40).*

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Please charge my ☐Visa/☐Access/☐Mastercard/☐Amex.
Card Number:..............................
Card Expiry Date:..............................
Your signature:.............................. Date:..............................

CHEQUE
A cheque is enclosed for £..............................(sterling) made payable to EMAP Images Ltd.

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- *This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society.*
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- *If an error is made by EMAP Images Ltd or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid.*
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POWER UP

Stand by for action! This month in Power Up! we've got another batch of up-to-the-minute complete solutions and player's guides, including Sim Tower, Descent, X-COM: Terror From The Deep, Flight Of The Amazon Queen and, to kick off...

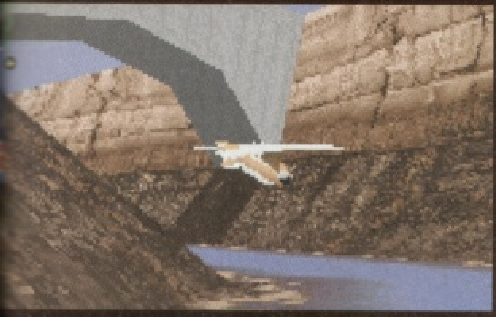
Phew! Slipstream, eh? It might be fast, it might be pretty, it might be blummin' playable, but one thing it ain't is easy-peasy. But hello, what's this? Why, if it isn't another great PC GAMES player's guide!

Slipstream 5000

Rysho
Accept
Kin & Gi
Accept

Greetings, Speedfreaks!

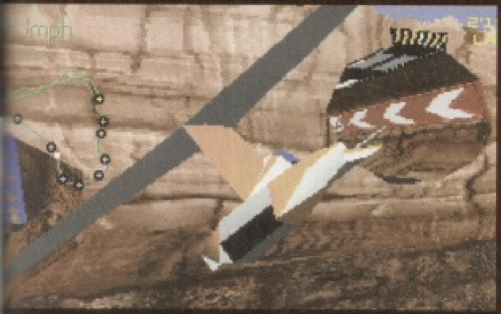
The following player's guide will take you around each and every track and teach you how to hone your Slipstreaming skills to perfection. It'll even tell you where two 'secret' chambers are hidden, each containing a plethora of wonderful goodies. However, be warned that it assumes you're playing the game on the 'Hard' (i.e. default) difficulty setting. Hey, come on — we don't want to make things too easy for you, do we?



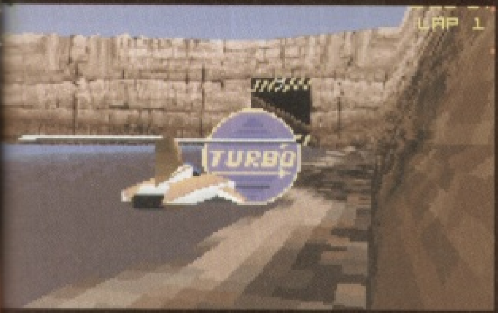
Arizona

This is the very first race in the Slipstream 5000 championship season, and hence your first chance to splash the cash in the upgrades shop. However, don't go mad and start stocking up on missiles — you really don't need them yet. No, you're better off buying a Charger instead, which will serve you better in the long run. Hey, trust us — we're professionals...

Once the race starts, accelerate to top whack and then kick in the turbos. As you round the first bend, fly low and to the right-hand side of Coyote Spire — if you've done it right, you should fly into a Turbo pick-up, which you'd be advised to use straight away.



Keep flying as low as you possibly can (although please try to avoid crashing, *of course*) — this will help to keep you out of the targetting sights of your rival Slipstreamers. They're a vicious bunch, who'll do anything to ram plasma up your exhaust.



Pull up just before the bridge and then, as you pass under the bridge, fly high towards the left-hand wall. With any luck you should find a secret tunnel containing a multitude of juicy pick-ups. Grab a Turbo and then swoop back out onto the track without slowing down. You can come in here as many times as you like and use as many bonuses as you like, safe in the knowledge that your rival Slipstreamers won't nab any because they're too thick to know that this little treasure trove exists.

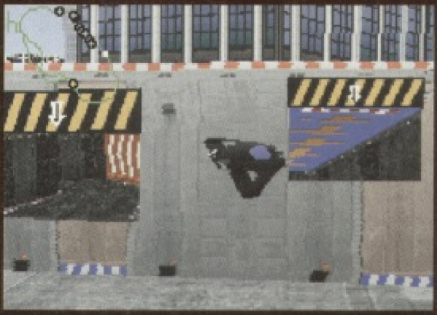
Take the right-hand split, keeping at top speed, and use your turbo as you exit the tunnel. Again, try to keep as low as possible to avoid being shot, all the way past the dam. (Incidentally, don't use the pit lane on this track unless you absolutely have to — you'll waste precious time and end up dropping down the rankings if you do.)

Once over the dam, collect one of the Turbos that you'll see bobbing tantalisingly over the water. If you find two Turbos in this section, use the one you've got straight away, otherwise keep it in reserve to give you a bit of extra 'oomph' as you approach the finishing line on the final lap.

Chicago

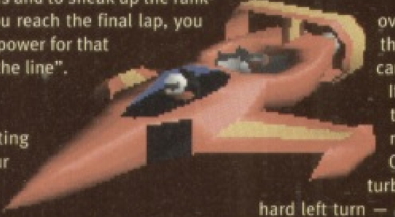
Oh, Chicaga, Chicago, it's my kinda town... And it'll be your kinda town too if you follow this advice. First off, go shopping with your prize money and buy a Loader — it's always handy to have onboard.

This track is actually a lot easier to navigate your way around than it looks. As with the Arizona course, rev up to full speed as soon as possible and stay there, kicking in the turbos whenever possible to pull ahead of the pack.



At the first split, bank off to the right and fly straight into the pit lane (which you'll see just on the left after you fly through the tunnel exit). As you enter the blue section of the pit lane, switch to and activate your turbos. This will give you a few extra seconds of mega-speed boost, because as you're using up your turbo energy, it'll be instantly replenished.

Use this sneaky — but very clever — trick to shave seconds of your lap times and to sneak up the rankings. However, when you reach the final lap, you should save your turbo power for that last minute "push over the line".

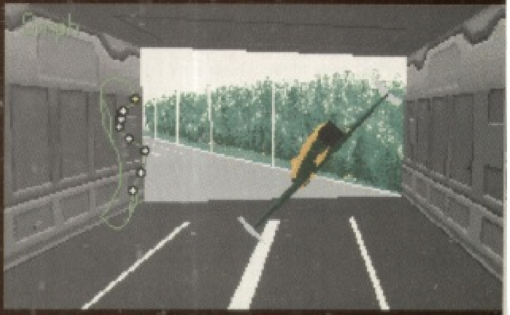


Amazon

Although it's tempting to splash your cash, our advice is, er, don't. Instead, save your cash for the next race. Yes, yes, we know it sounds like complete foolishness but you'll be thanking us later, honest. This is by far the easiest track of the whole Slipstream season — just remember to take the right fork at Incas Island and you should win, no problems.

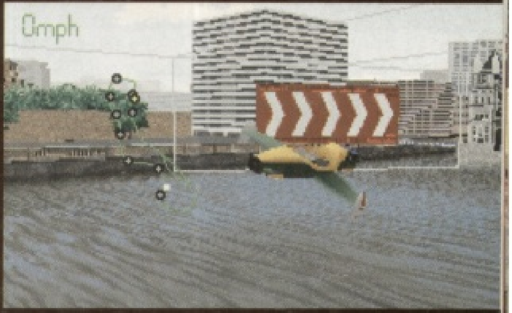
London

With any luck you should by now have amassed enough dosh to buy the third-level Turbo. Don't bother buying either the second or indeed the fourth Turbos because the improvements they make to your craft's racing performance are very marginal to say the least, and certainly not worth spending your hard fought-for money on.



If you've got any savings left over, invest in a Disrupter, but use it sparingly as you'll find that it will come in extremely handy in the next race.

Once you start racing, don't whack in the turbos as normal — although the first right turn is nice 'n' easy, it's followed by a difficult hard left. It *is* possible to make it through if you're very good, but if you're not you'll end up like so much strawberry jam smeared over the walls. Other than this, though, the rest of the track is a breeze, and can be taken at full pelt.



If you're comfortable flying low, take the right split as it's slightly faster. If not, veer off down the left tunnel. Once you reach the Thames, use your turbo and prepare yourself for a really hard left turn — if you manage to take this corner at full whack, you can whizz up the rankings.

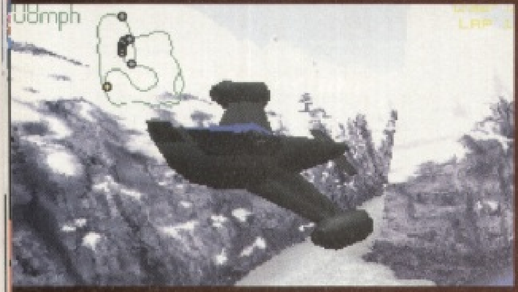
Use the pit lane on every lap, saving the turbo for the straight down the Thames except on the final lap, when you should reserve it for the now-customary dash for the finishing line.

12mph
CHASE CAMERA

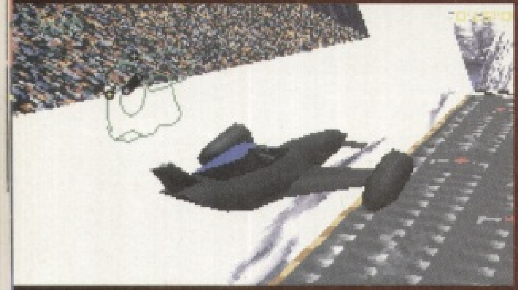
Norway

Did you manage to keep your Disrupter in fine fettle? No? Oh well, stock up on another one if you *must* .

When the race starts, dive down and try to keep as low as possible, thus avoiding the vicious firefight that will inevitably be raging just above your head. When you come up to the split, take the right-hand path as it's by far the quicker of the two.



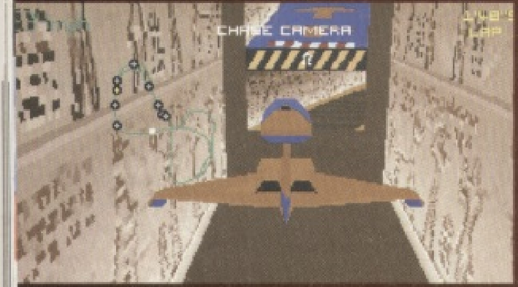
As before, use the pit lane every lap to recharge your turbos, but save them until you reach the home straight. As you leave the pit lane, dive down and then quickly pull up and to the right — if performed correctly, this manoeuvre should get you around the hairpin, no problems!



Egypt

In the shop, it's best to buy a brace of Scramblers if you've got the cash available. However, if you haven't (just what *have* you been wasting it all on?), simply stock up on the cheaper weapons — after all, you're going to need *something* to help you survive this gruelling race.

Moving blast doors make their first appearance on this track, and they're right sods. The first one crops up just after the first couple of corners — fly highon your approach to it and you should scrape through the gap without a scratch.



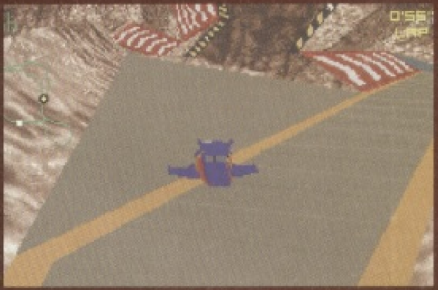
Push the pedal to the metal for the rest of the course until you reach the split. Fly down the bottom shaft, but look out for the extremely vicious right-hand turn. If you're no good at taking tight corners, then fly down the other tunnel — it'll save you hair loss in the long run.

The rest of the track shouldn't prove a problem. Avoid using the pits if you can help it, and — as always — save some juice for the finishing line.

France

When stocking up on weapons, bear in mind that missiles are something of a waste of time — the track twists and turns so much that they're practically useless unless you're firing them at point-blank range, in which case you might as well stick to your lasers.

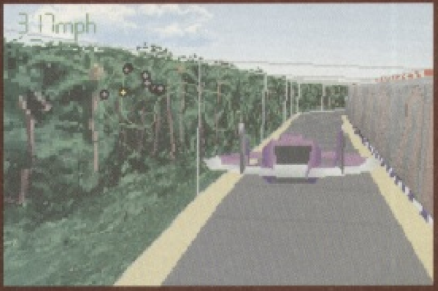
This course is rather easy — basically, keep to the left of the track all the way around, except when you fly out of the cavern. Unless you need patching up, it's not really worth bothering with the pit lane.



Hawaii

By now you should have enough cash for the top-of-the-range Turbo. If you haven't bought it already, then buy it now — you haven't got a hope in hell of winning the race without it.

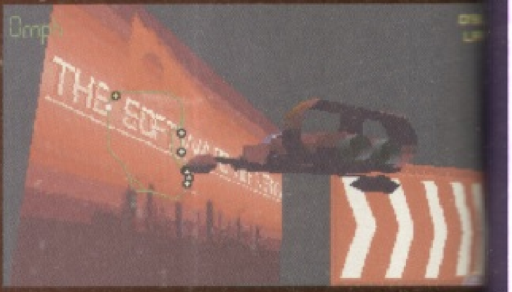
This course isn't too tough — there's a nice straight past the Plantations which is a perfect place to kick in the turbos. Your main problems come from those moving blast doors — if you get snagged on one of them you'll lose vital seconds. As before, don't bother taking the pit lane unless you must — you'll waste too much time, and that's one thing you won't have much of here.



Tokyo

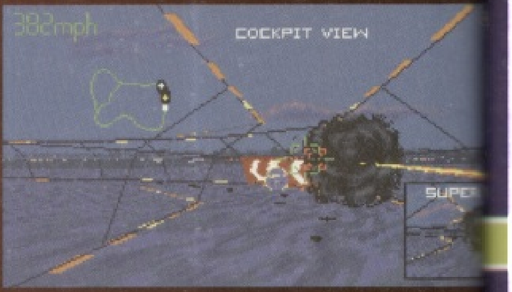
Your money is best spent here on Amblers, which can be used very effectively on Fuji Climb. (Incidentally, it's worth pointing out that if you take the pit lane well at full speed, it can be more beneficial than the Fuji Climb, although not quite as scenic, sadly.)

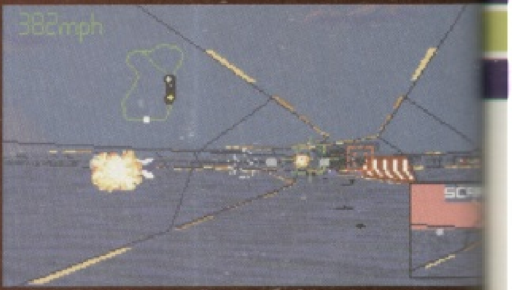
There's not a lot more to say about this track, apart from pointing out that it has a secret chamber! Yes, that's right — another one! If you keep your eyes peeled when you fly down the first tunnel, you should see a poster for the Software Refinery — simply fly into it for some extra pick-ups! As in Arizona, you can come in here as many times as you like — the other Slipstreamers won't, that's for sure. Hey, are we good to you or *what*?



New York

This is it — your last chance to pick up some much-needed points before the racing season ends and the championship winner is crowned. There's not a lot you need to know about this track — it's full of short, easy turns that you can easily take at top speed. The best advice is to buy as many weapons as possible, and to blast as many rivals as you can when the race starts. Other than that, you're on your own — good luck to you, and may the best Slipstreamer win!





MAXIS
SIMTOWER
SPACE AVAILABLE!
LEASE
MAXIS CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

SimTower

Build sky-high and keep your tenants happy with this in-depth players' guide to Maxis' superb SimTower. You could be the next Donald Trump!

The ultimate goal in SimTower is to build a skyscraper 100 storeys high that you can cap with a magnificent cathedral dome. You will only be able to achieve this if you pay heed to three main planks of the game, namely:

(1) Keeping your Sims, the tower's inhabitants and visitors, happy and relaxed. This keeps your population growing, since stressed-out visitors won't return and angry Sims may move out altogether.

(2) Keeping the tower profitable, so that you can add more storeys to it.

(3) Including all the different types of facility offered by the program in your tower, so that they contribute to your profits and your Sims' quality of life.

Population Control

In order to improve the rating of your tower, you need to meet certain population targets — see the Table (1) for the full details. The population includes apartment dwellers, visitors, office workers and hotel guests, which is why you see your population fluctuating quite a bit during the course of the day. Hotel guests check out in the morning and check in the following evening, while office workers start at 9.00am and leave at 5.00pm, for example.

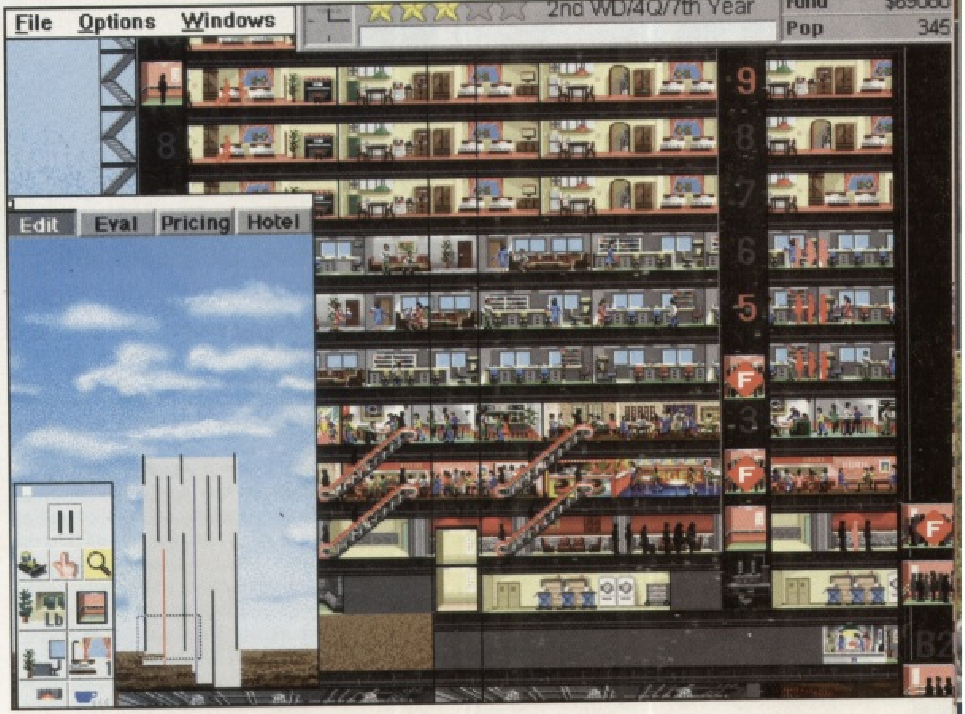
Once you've hit the population target for the next rating, you'll keep the rating even if the population then falls below the target number again. Provided you keep building, your population should increase steadily, so long as your Sims are happy.

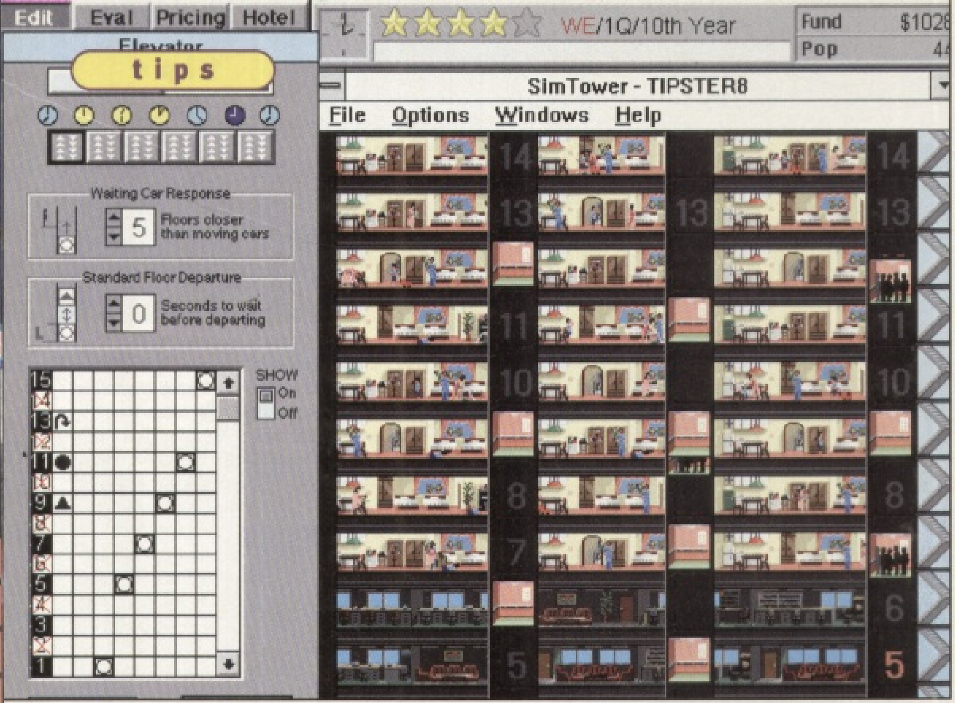
You can tell how happy your little Sims are in two ways. Check the lift queues: anyone who appears in pink is mildly stressed, and anyone in red is in a full-blown strop. Secondly, click on EVAL in the map window to see which of your suites and facilities are rated as 'Excellent' (light blue), 'Good' (yellow) or plain 'Terrible' (red).

SimTower has a quite complex playing model incorporated into it which determines what makes Sims unhappy and how they then react to their unhappiness. Basically, time spent moving from place to place in the tower is calculated in 'frames', the number of frames each Sim tots up translates into a stress rating, and the stress rating of the inhabiting Sims determines the 'Quality Of Life' rating for their hotel rooms, offices, condos, etc.

Thus when you click on the EVAL button, and see that an hotel room, say, is marked in red, it doesn't necessarily mean the hotel room is horrible, but that its inhabitants are having a horrible time. The best way to keep them happy is to keep them moving quickly around the tower. Time spent waiting for lifts is deemed very stressful, and time spent crawling up a lift that stops at every floor counts in frames.

Ideally, a Sim living on the 65th floor should whizz up an express lift to Floor 60, then transfer to a short





WE/1Q/10th Year

Fund $1028

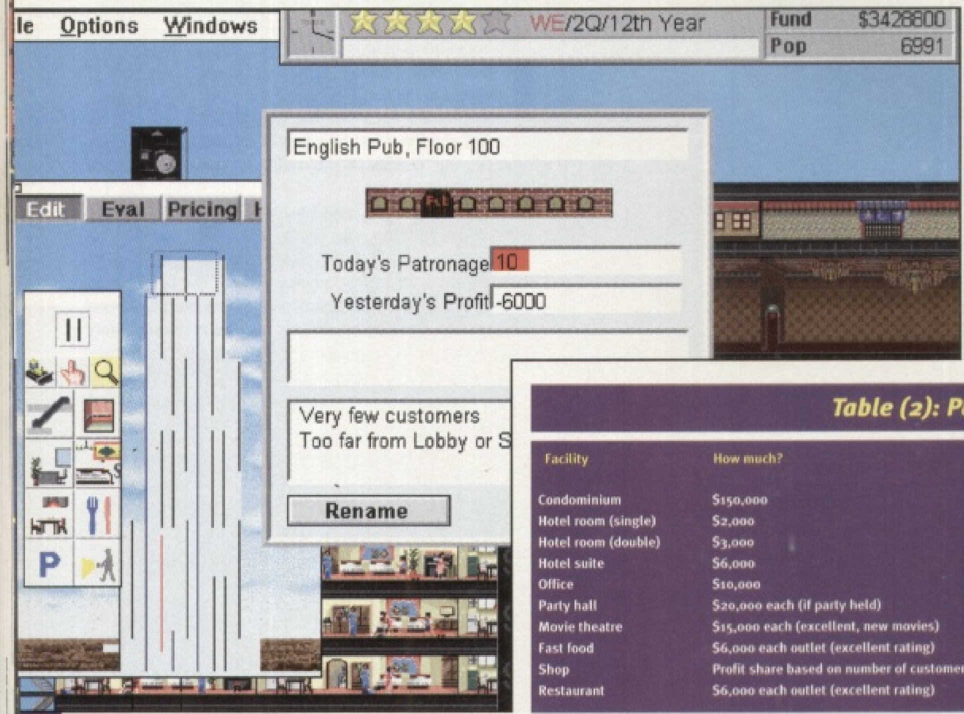
Pop 44

SimTower - TIPSTER8

Waiting Car Response: 5 Floors closer than moving cars

Standard Floor Departure: 0 Seconds to wait before departing

SHOW: ☑ On ☐ Off



WE/2Q/12th Year

Fund $3428800

Pop 6991

English Pub, Floor 100

Today's Patronage 10

Yesterday's Profit -6000

Very few customers
Too far from Lobby or S

Rename

hop up a standard lift to Floor 65. Note that Sims will only transfer lifts once, and that standard lifts will only stretch over 30 floors, so once you have more than 30 floors in the building, you're going to need express lifts, which link with other lifts by placing sky lobbies every 15 floors.

In condominiums (apartments), restaurants and fast food joints, stress ratings link directly to population growth: Sims with a low stress rating will encourage other Sims to come and live/visit the premises; Sims with a high stress rating will move out/won't return. In shops, the quality is determined simply by the number of customers.

Quick Population & Stress Tips

- Add as many lift cars to each lift shaft as you can afford as quickly as possible; they will cross over without mishap.
- Experiment with changing the flow of your lifts on the lift simulation screen, but don't expect it to work miracles. Note that Sims waiting to the right of a lift want to go down, while Sims standing to the left want to go up. Thus a lift placed on the extreme left-hand edge of the building will be used only by those Sims going up.
- You can force lifts not to stop at certain floors by clicking on the floor number on the lift simulation screen. Thus, two adjacent lifts could reduce waiting time if one stops on even floors, one on odd. Again, don't expect this to solve all your problems.
- Once you start building extensively underground, it's worth putting in an express lift running up to the first floor (lobby floor) only, even though express lifts stop at *every* floor below the first. This is simply because express lifts hold 42 passengers rather than 21 for a standard lift, so you can transport more people in a single elevator.
- Lifts will need to be staggered once your tower is taller than 30 floors.
- Once your tower is getting really big, be prepared to overhaul the entire lift system. Save up some money and bulldoze lifts which are no longer in a convenient place and replace them more sensibly.

Table (1): Reaching For The Stars

Rating	Population needed	Additional facilities needed
1 star	0	None
2 stars	300	None
3 stars	1,000	>1 security office
4 stars	5,000	>1 hotel suite Adequate recycling centres (usually 1) Adequate medical centres (usually 1) Favourable VIP rating
5 stars	10,000	Metro station
Tower	15,000	Cathedral dome

Making money

Players of SimCity 2000 have an advantage here, since the principles which applied in SimCity will stand you in good stead in SimTower. Basically, keep your building work down to little and often, rather than going for a massive building scheme that drains you of funds and takes ages to pay off. Ensure the transport system (i.e. the lifts) is efficient and that will make your facilities popular — thus bringing in dosh. Keep in mind which facilities will keep paying you money on a regular basis and make sure your tower has plenty of them.

At the end of each quarter your maintenance costs will be deducted — don't be caught out by this or else you'll spend a long time in the red! Keep a weather eye on your outgoings by checking the Finance window — from the Windows menu, or double-click on the lobby.

Table (2): Paying Your Way

Facility	How much?	When
Condominium	$150,000	Once only — when tenant moves in.
Hotel room (single)	$2,000	When guest checks out — between 9.00am-12.00pm.
Hotel room (double)	$3,000	When guest checks out — between 9.00am-12.00pm.
Hotel suite	$6,000	When guest checks out — between 9.00am-12.00pm.
Office	$10,000	Quarterly.
Party hall	$20,000 each (if party held)	5.00pm daily.
Movie theatre	$15,000 each (excellent, new movies)	8.00pm daily.
Fast food	$6,000 each outlet (excellent rating)	9.00pm daily.
Shop	Profit share based on number of customers	9.00pm daily.
Restaurant	$6,000 each outlet (excellent rating)	11.00pm daily.

Quick Money-Making Tips

- Short of cash? Build condos — they cost $80,000 each, but you get $150,000 as soon as the tenants move in.
- As soon as they're available, build hotel suites rather than single rooms. Lots of hotels ensures steady cashflow. Incidentally, you don't *need* the service elevator for housekeeping, so long as there's a housekeeper's office on each hotel floor.
- The movie theatre doesn't bring in massive profits — the idea is that it brings in people. However, it is a good idea to change the film every two quarters. After the second quarter, attendance goes down to 'Average' if you don't change the film. After the third quarter, it goes down to 'Terrible'.
- If a shop is vacant with no takers in sight, lower the rent right down to the minimum. Some poor sucker will usually move in straightaway, at which point

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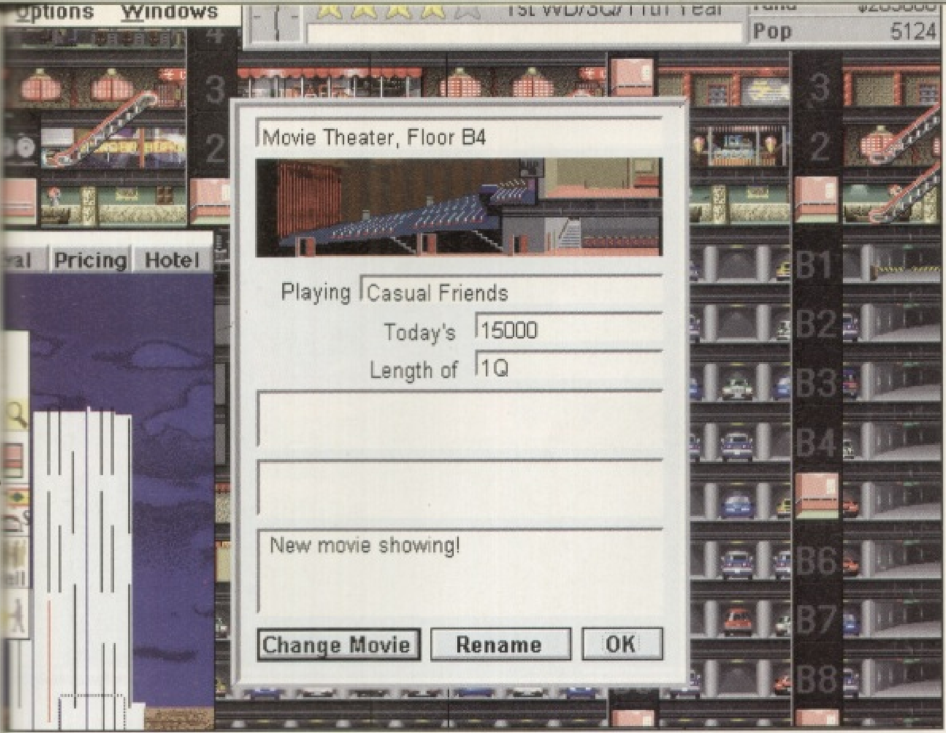


1st WD/3Q/11th Year

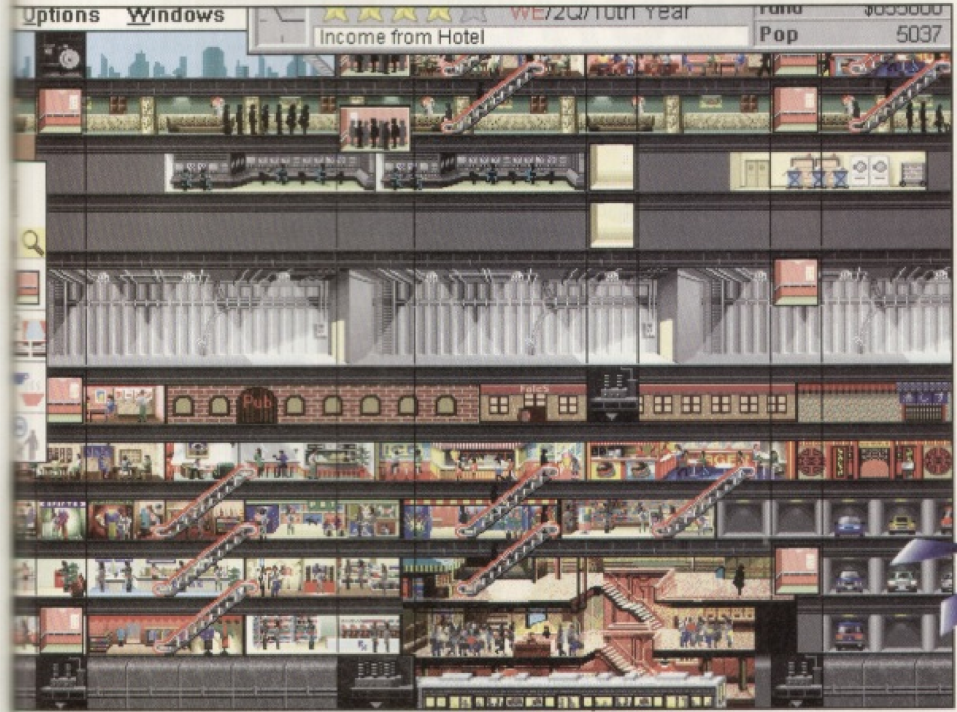
Movie Theater, Floor B4

Playing: Casual Friends

Today's: 15000

Length of: 1Q

New movie showing!



WE/2Q/10th Year

Income from Hotel

you zap the rent back up again. Chances are they'll stay on — that is, unless there is something very wrong with its location.

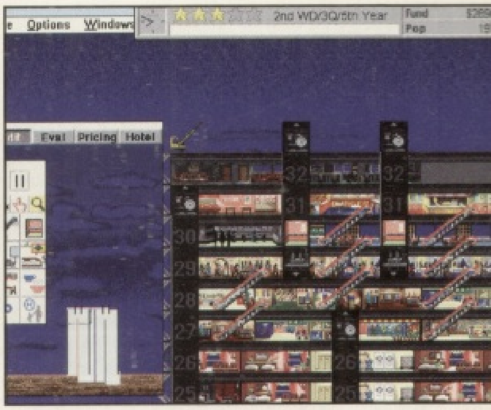
- When you build a metro station (4 star rating needed), plan space around it for shops and restaurants. Metro users do all their eating, drinking and shopping underground, and these basement outlets will become *very* profitable very quickly. Once business around the metro is booming, raise the rent (which is paid to you quarterly and separately from your profit share).

Using The Facilities

Rule One: Don't mix different types of facilities on the same floor. A floor of fast food joints needs to be a whole layer of fast food joints. Sure, you can put a block of hotel rooms next to a condo, adjacent to shops, but you'll just get the Sims moaning about the noise all the time. Noise, however, only seems to travel sideways: they won't care if there's a party going on on the floor above, only next to them.

It's tempting to stuff unglamorous facilities out of sight down in the basement, and some things, like the recycling centres and (of course) the metro, need to go underground. But security offices should be placed at regular points throughout the building (try putting one on each lobby floor), or woe betide you when the terrorist pops up to announce he's placed a bomb in the building and that you have until 1.00pm to find it. A security office every 15th floor pretty well guarantees you won't get blown up.

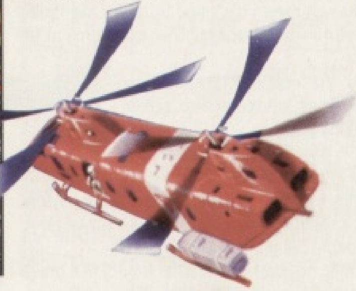
Keep shopping floors, restaurants and fast food outlets close to lobbies to ensure maximum traffic. Above about Floor 60, it will be difficult to maintain profitable shops and restaurants because communications with ground level will take too long for visitors. Putting escalators from the lobbies to the commercial floors (shops, restaurants, fast food, cinema) *greatly* eases congestion in the lifts — Sims will use the escalators leaving the lifts free for residents and office workers. Stairs are okay at the start of the game, but you can more or less dispense with them once escalators become available.

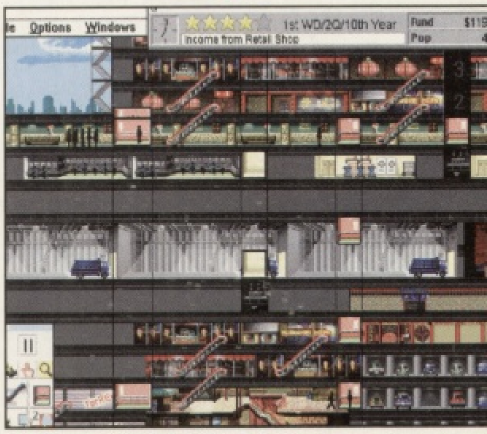


2nd WD/3Q/5th Year

Quick Facility Tips

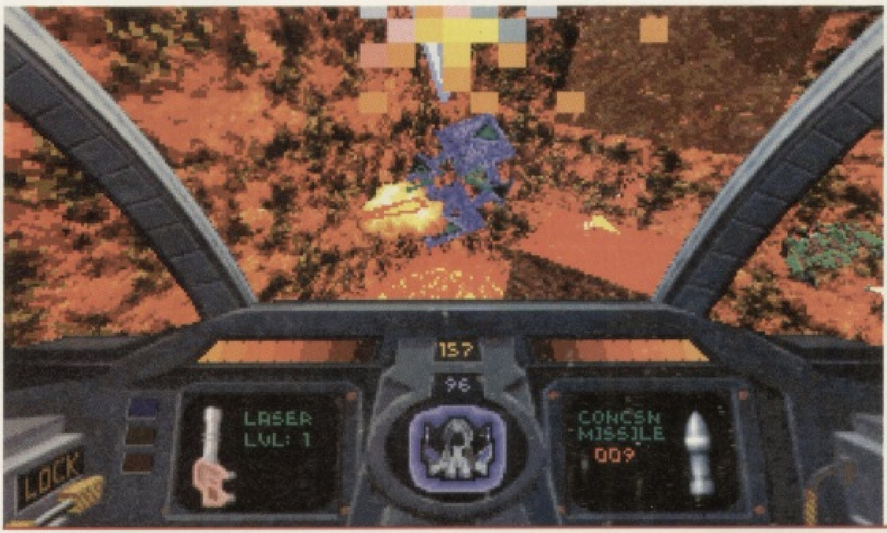
- One recycling centre won't service the whole tower — you need about one centre per 30 floors, and they need to placed next to each other, so you need to plan ahead when you place the very first one.
- Make sure that the housekeepers can reach the hotel rooms, either via the service elevator or by placing a housekeeping office on each hotel floor. Otherwise, you'll get a cockroach infestation and will have to destroy the rooms.
- Once you build hotel suites, you'll get a visit from a VIP. Once this happens, you cannot move to the next star rating if the VIP's stay is less than satisfactory. However, if he does have a horrible time, he will visit again to give you another chance to prove yourself (and keep revisiting until his stay is comfortable and you can proceed when you reach the next population target).





1st WD/2Q/10th Year

Income from Retail Shop



Descent

Descent is a refreshing change to the plethora of inferior Doom clones doing the rounds. But guiding your skimmer through the renegade robot-infested landscapes without dying a horrible death is no doddle — but this guide should help.

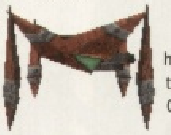
General Lee

Descent's sheer speed and its relentless onslaught of deadly foes nullifies much tactical thinking. The following tips, however, might save your skin — for a while at least...

- Prioritise! Keep your level mission in mind and forget about collecting power-ups unless they're easily accessible.
- Explore each level carefully — many corners make great ambush points where you can merrily blast robots to bits without their fire reaching you.
- Alternate your weapons usage to maximise the power of your attacks — but whatever you do, don't waste your resources.
- Your skimmer may invert itself without you knowing it — to keep upright, periodically tap the rotate buttons.
- Fire once to open doors then hang back to avoid ambush. Slide round to trigger hidden entrances then check the wireframe before entering.
- If you're about to die, head back to the level's start so when you restart you can return quicker to the wreckage and collect your floating weapons.
- In network mode get on the scene of an opponent's demise first, collect his stash then wait for other vultures to home in and take them out.
- Many robots have recognisable behavioural patterns — some just march back and forth, for example, so wait 'til their backs are turned then take 'em out at your leisure.
- On new territory slide up and down the walls to spring hidden access areas and secret passages.
- Use the cloaking defence in the most heavily-infested areas — it serves as the best damage limitation device. Alternatively, hang back and pick robots off one by one while staying out of their weapons' range.
- Smart missiles take out several robots at a time, especially in large, open-plan areas. If you know an enemy lurks behind a door, fire a laser burst to open then instantly let off a missile before he can summon up an attack.
- Fly low enough over lava and it will splash up, wasting anything behind you.
- If robots fire at your ship then haul arse — even if it misses, the resulting explosion of razor-sharp shrapnel can really hurt.
- Before destroying the power source at the end of each level, make sure the escape tube is clear — once the reactor blows your time is limited, and you don't want to get caught up in a dogfight.

The Bad Guys

You can't have a decent shoot-'em-up without decent enemies. Descent has lots. And lots. And lots. Here's a rough guide of what they are and how to kill them.



Class 1 Drone (Joshes)

These light-weights travel in packs and have easily dodgeable weaponry. Strafe while turning, vaporising them with a Level 3/4 Quad-laser.

Class 2 Drone (Ti-bots)

More powerful than Joshes but similar tactics apply — they tend to lurk though, so keep an eye out.

Medium Lifter (Slashers)

Using swing-arm cutters to slice your ship, packs of these lurk in crevices then take you from behind. Use the Spreadfire Cannon if they're charging or Proximity Bombs on pursuers. Some are cloaked so listen out for their distinctive screech.

Small Hulk (Baby Hulks)

Moderately powerful wit
it armour, these are b
d with a blast from the Vul

Medium Hulk (Brown Hulks)

Armed with missile launchers and powerful (but easily avoidable) Concussion Missiles, are sometimes cloaked and can fire at you round corners — again, Vulcan Cannon fire is your
destroying them.

Heavy Hulk (Red Hulk)

These have a complement of homing
issiles which you have to dodge until
finally slam against a wall. Cloak your-
rge at no more than two at a time, Vulcan Cannons a-blazing.

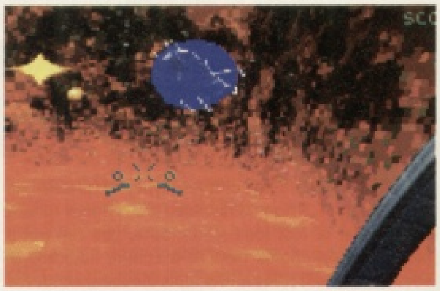
Processing Robots (Spiders)

Armed with triple-fire lasers, these spawn when hit into scores of Spider Babies so keep firing hard with the Quad-lasers.

**Class 1 Driller (Ma
Gun Charlie)**

Heavily packed
Vulcan Cannons but
on the armour, these a
hilated with a single
though, they're hard t
hang out in dark rooms) and lethal with their heavy fire power.

LASER
LVL: 1
CONCSN
MISSILE
003



Secondary Lifter (Spray Bots)

Stuffed with multi-fire lasers these are lethal in packs, so line them up one in front of another and shoot them in order with Plasma cannons.

Advanced Lifter (Swiss Army Bot)

With four swing-arm cutters apiece, these attack in packs and are a lot like Slashers but quieter and more deadly. Splatter them with the Spreadfire Cannon.

Class 1 Heavy Driller (Cyber Knights)

These are nasty Plasma cannon-wielding beasts — attack from afar with Homing or Smart Missiles.

PTMC Defense Prototype (Crazy Eddie)

These hit you with high level Quad-lasers so try to dance round them, using strafing turns and letting loose with the Plasma or Fusion Cannon.

Class 2 Platform Robot (Missile Bird)

Multi-fire Rocket Launchers make these especially deadly. Squeeze off a Smart Missile if they're alone or blast a pack with a Mega Missile. Generators can create them, so finish these off with some carefully-placed Proximity Bombs.

Class 3 Gopher Robot (Flea)

No direct attacks from these critters which sometimes carry security keys, just a penchant for flying ahead of you and dropping Proximity Bombs. Don't tailgate them — just shoot far ahead with a fully-charged Fusion Cannon to splat both bomb and Flea.

Secret Robot Classes

These three foes aren't listed in the game's intro, but they're around...

LASER LVL: 1
CONCSN MISSILE 005
LOCK

LASER LVL: 1
CONCSN MISSILE 005
LOCK

LASER LVL: 1
CONCSN MISSILE 005
LOCK

Platform Robots

Deadly in large packs, these are similar to the Missile Birds with their powerful multi-fire lasers. Deal with them solo using the Smart Missile, or use a Mega Missile on packs. Charging at packs often confuses them and you may make it through unscathed.

Fusion Hulk (Purple Death)

Well-armoured and packing Fusion cannons, these can even survive a Mega Missile hit. They're slow, though, so dodge them and let 'em have it.

Mini Processors (Baby Spiders)

These are light weights but fast-moving and relentless. Keep blasting until they're history.

Big Bosses

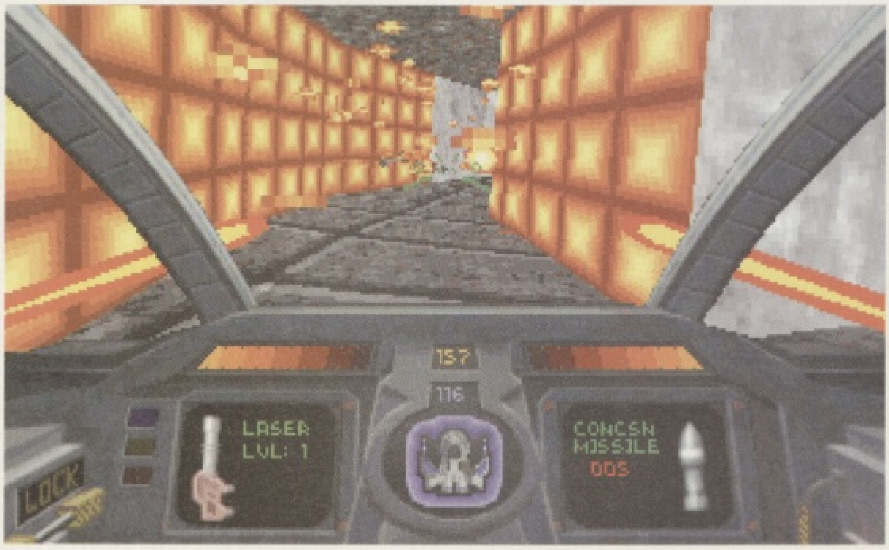
Superhulk

Located on Level 7 of the Shareware edition, this guy has dual missile launchers with Smart Missiles and a teleport array. Slap on the cloaking device found near him to deflect his Smart Missile pellets and give him everything you've got. He's not stupid, though, and will fire in your direction once you start letting rip or teleport once he's hit too often.

When not cloaked, fly close to the wall and keep moving so the Smart Bombs hit the wall and not you. Drop clusters of Proximity Bombs in his chamber in the open and often he'll teleport into them. He makes strange noises before he teleports or fires, so listen hard while continuously strafing.

Megahulk

This Level 27 end-boss teleports, is armed with Mega Missiles and creates new robots to prop up his defence. Your best bet is to find a heap of Mega Missiles and Invulnerability Spheres, get in as close as you can and let him have it at point-blank range — he'll then let rip with Mega Missiles, taking out many of his defending robots. When you run out, use Smart Missiles and hope for the best!



Hidden Levels

Three of Descent's 30 levels are hidden in asteroid fields adjoining the main levels. Here's how to reach them:

Secret Level 1

As you near the Reactor on Level 10, head for the Extra Life icon sitting above a glowing cube. Capture the icon then stay in position until you see the Reactor room doors open and two red Hulks appear. Blast the Reactor then head for the red door. Pass through and shoot the second panel on the right hand side of the wall to trigger the opening device and reveal the secret level.

Secret Level 2

Enter one of three red doors into the Reactor chamber on Level 21, then pass through one of the three open doors on the far side of the chamber. Pick up a weapon then blast the door to open it. Leave the room and search for another doorway on the right-hand side of the wall containing a cloaking device. Fly in and allow the door to close behind you, then fire to re-open it.

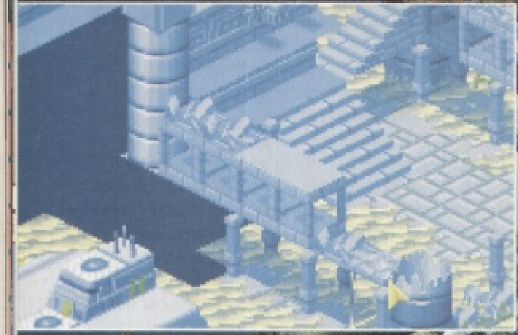
Return to the Reactor; the four protective panels rise allowing you to destroy the power source (keep the fire constant to keep the panels open). Head for the secret exit which is just beyond the regular exit around a serpentine corridor at the far end of this tunnel, in the ceiling just past the pillar to your left.

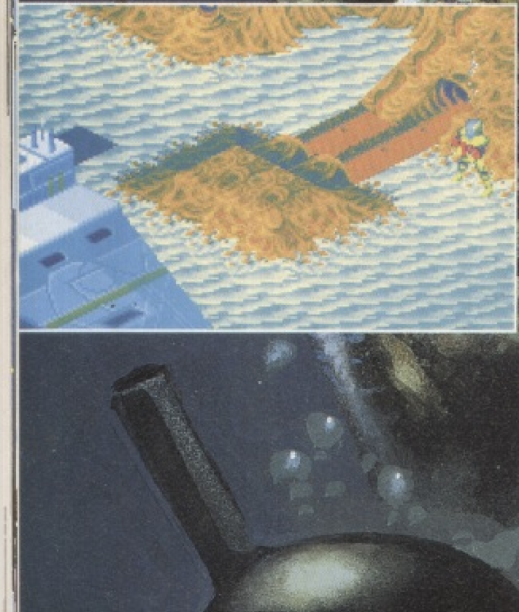
Secret Level 3

You'll find the third secret level on Level 24 in the large pit-like chamber where the normal exit is located. The secret exit is at the bottom right, next to the hallway marked with the red door. Search in this massive chamber for a small chamber containing missiles.

Are multi-tentacled aliens ruining your beaches? Tsk! Where's Roy Scheider and the crew of the SeaQuest DSV when you need 'em, eh? Ah well, here's some tips to help you beat MicroProse's top sci-fi strategy sim...

X-COM
Terror From The Deep





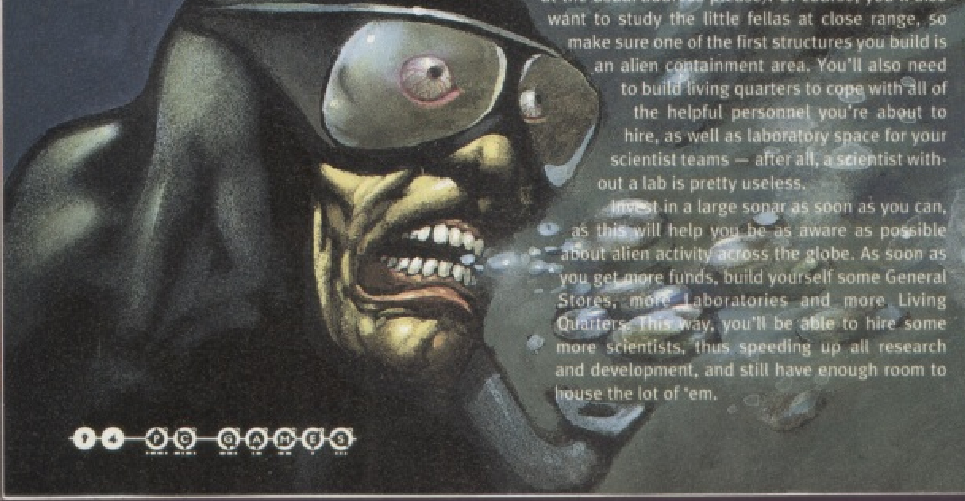
Getting Started

Gosh! There's so much to talk about — where to begin? Well, if you're hoping to get anywhere in X-COM: Terror From The Deep, you need to make sure that the very first thing you do is think about building a decent primary base. This must obviously cater for your immediate needs, but should also include structures that can prove invaluable later on. The key to this game is research and development, so you'll need plenty of room for all of your scientists and their staff if you want to progress at a decent speed. But first things first...

What with the game being, er, 'fairly reliant' upon access to water and lots of it (what with the 'Terror' coming from 'The Deep' and all that) you need to place your first base just off the coast of a large and well-financed country, such as either America, Europe or Japan. The reason for this is that, because of you being right in the very heart of their territory, you'll have a better success rate when dealing with nearby threats — and keeping the countries that supply the largest financial support happy isn't exactly going to do you any harm now, is it?

As previously mentioned, you'll need to do some serious research if you want to beat the aliens at their own game, and there really is no better way to study them than by cutting the little green buggers open side-ways (vivisection complaints to David Upchurch at the usual address please). Of course, you'll also want to study the little fellas at close range, so make sure one of the first structures you build is an alien containment area. You'll also need to build living quarters to cope with all of the helpful personnel you're about to hire, as well as laboratory space for your scientist teams — after all, a scientist without a lab is pretty useless.

Invest in a large sonar as soon as you can, as this will help you be as aware as possible about alien activity across the globe. As soon as you get more funds, build yourself some General Stores, more Laboratories and more Living Quarters. This way, you'll be able to hire some more scientists, thus speeding up all research and development, and still have enough room to house the lot of 'em.



Though you probably (not to mention 'hopefully') won't have to deal with aliens attacking your base until much later on in the game, watch how you build your base as far as shape and facility arrangement goes. Remember, the more spread out the base's design is, the harder it'll be to defend. It's also worth remembering that the aliens only have two ways of getting into your base; either through the Air Lock or the Sub Pens.

A fairly sound overall strategy as regards the use of multiple bases is to have at least one base on the planet that is set up as a research and development centre. Try to have about 100+ scientists and 75+ technicians, but make sure that the base is well defended from attack.

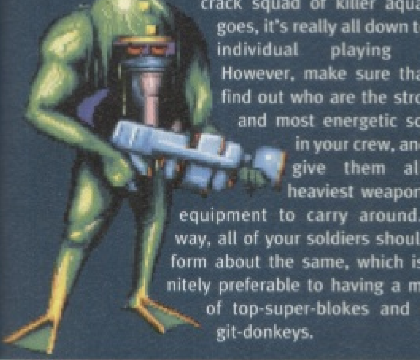
Early Priorities

When you start performing research into the aliens (which you should do straight away), always research alien corpses first. Once your alien containment facilities are complete and you're able to capture a live specimen, keep researching him as they will sometimes give you different information — and information is power in this game!

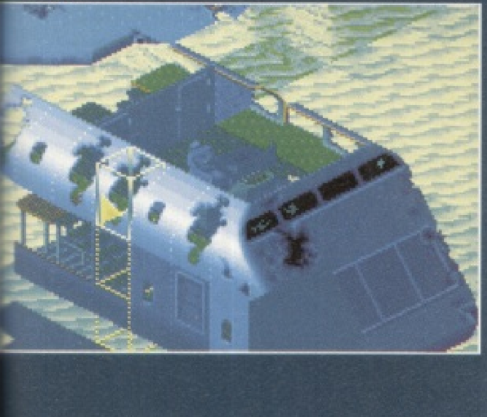
As far as armaments are concerned, get yourself some Gauss weapons as soon as possible as they're pretty useful against the early aliens, namely the Gillmen and the Aquatoids (and anyone who played X-COM's equally-excellent prequel, UFO: Enemy Unknown, will recognise the Aquatoids for precisely

what they are — wetter versions of the Sectoid, with a few surgical differences and the odd implant here and there.)

When you come to equip your Triton craft, remember that you'll need to arm them differently depending upon whether they're performing above or below water. Make sure you're well versed in the various weapons' attributes and quirks, as some weapons will only operate properly when they're underwater (or vice versa).



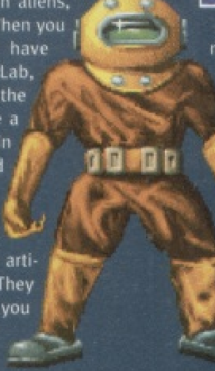
As far as equipping your crack squad of killer aquanauts goes, it's really all down to your individual playing style. However, make sure that you find out who are the strongest and most energetic soldiers in your crew, and then give them all the heaviest weapons and equipment to carry around. This way, all of your soldiers should perform about the same, which is definitely preferable to having a mixture of top-super-blokes and weak-git-donkeys.



Molecular Control

There's really nothing more annoying and damn bloody irritating than sending your top soldiers into a battle situation, only to have their brains fried by psionic aliens to the point that they start shooting each other, running around like nutters or performing Bernie Clifton's 'hilarious' ostrich routines. Counter this by getting interested in Molecular Control from an early age. Before you can do anything vaguely molecular, you'll need to capture a live terrorist. This allows research into Molecular Control Laboratories, which, in turn, leads to the MC Reader — but only if you have one in your stores.

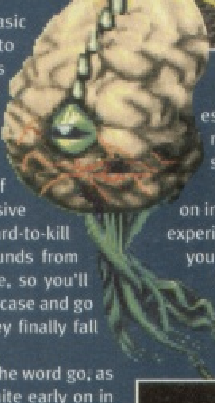
If you want to stand any chance of actually using Molecular Control on aliens, you'll need an MC Disrupter. When you capture a live Tasoth and have already researched the MC Lab, you'll then be able to research the Disrupter. This may sound like a lot of hassle but, like psionics in UFO, it's a major advantage and well worth the bother.



One other point on financing all of the above — don't keep old weaponry and alien artifacts that you're finished with. They only clog up your stores, and you can sell them off to keep the money rolling in.

Showtime!

Lobstermen are about the toughest aliens you'll come up against. And just to make things worse, ranged weapons hardly do them any damage at all! The most effective weapons against these little hors d'oeuvres are the close-combat ones such as the Vibro Blades. If you don't have Vibro Blades, a Thermic Lance also does the job effectively (at which point you can just serve with a salad and seasoning.)



To get hold of the most basic close-combat weapon you'll need to research a Calcinite Corpse. Calcinites are (he added, not wishing to sound at all patronising) a terrorising breed, so you'll find them at, er, you know, terror sites (doh!).

Gillmen pose a different kind of problem for your aquanauts, as explosive weapons do very little damage to the hard-to-kill gits. Grenades and high explosive rounds from the Gas Cannon are fairly useless here, so you'll need to get your best marksmen on the case and go back to shooting the buggers until they finally fall over (i.e. kill them!).

Tackling terror sites is a must from the word go, as you'll find Deep Ones at these sites quite early on in the game. Deep Ones are, incidentally, the key to early armour for your aquanauts.

Your deployment of the aquanauts becomes more crucial in the later months, as the aliens will start to throw devices such as Sonic Pulse Grenades at your lads and lasses as they leave the craft. Try not to deploy your aquanauts too close nor too far apart, as this means that they will still be able to cover each other with opportunity fire, but without risking the possibility of genocide every time some green sod pokes his head out of a hole and drops a bomb down their trousers.

And Finally...

(1) There is a wealth of information at your fingertips, so make use of it. As well as having a good read through the entries in the UFOpaedia, take time to study the graphs and make sure you're aware of the various 'hotspots' around the globe.

(2) You can't risk losing financial backing, especially when things start getting hairy, so make sure you respond quickly to any alien sightings near the 'big spender' countries.

(3) You can't afford to lose aquanauts early on in the game, as these will provide skillful and experienced soldiers later in on (when, believe me, you'll really need them). Don't be afraid to start the game again from scratch once you've had a few 'learning games'. The first few months are an excellent opportunity to train your troops on the job.

You're stuck in Flight Of The Amazon Queen? You're joking, right? Of course you are — Joe King, pilot for hire! Fret no more, here's the full solution.

Flight Of The Amazon Queen

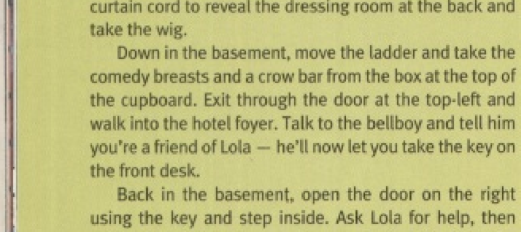
The Great Escape

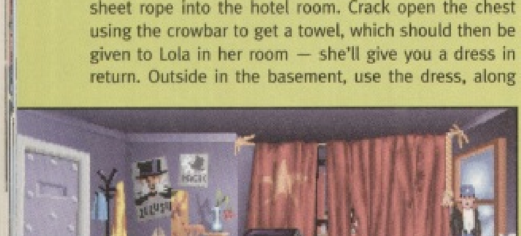
Joe begins the game locked inside the hotel room. Escaping is simple — just pick up the sheets on the right, then take the other sheet to uncover a laundry chute. Tie both sheets together and attach the resulting 'rope' to the radiator. Before climbing down the chute, yank the curtain cord to reveal the dressing room at the back and take the wig.

Down in the basement, move the ladder and take the comedy breasts and a crow bar from the box at the top of the cupboard. Exit through the door at the top-left and walk into the hotel foyer. Talk to the bellboy and tell him you're a friend of Lola — he'll now let you take the key on the front desk.

Back in the basement, open the door on the right using the key and step inside. Ask Lola for help, then while she's in the shower, leave and climb back up the sheet rope into the hotel room. Crack open the chest using the crowbar to get a towel, which should then be given to Lola in her room — she'll give you a dress in return. Outside in the basement, use the dress, along with the wig and the comedy breasts, to disguise yourself as a women and sneak past the thugs in the hotel foyer and walk to Sparky's truck.

On the back of the truck, pick up the hay to find a canister of oil — take and use it on Rico's car to send it spinning out of control. When you finally arrive at the airport, Anderson will be trying to prevent Faye from travelling on your plane. Insult Anderson and then punch him in the face, then watch as the Amazon Queen flies off, is struck by lightning and crashes down into the jungle.





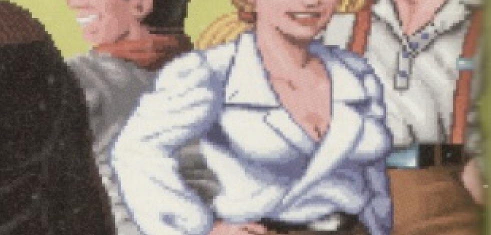
Jungle Fever

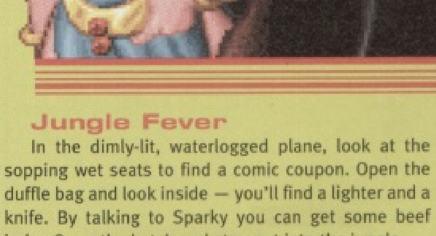
In the dimly-lit, waterlogged plane, look at the sopping wet seats to find a comic coupon. Open the duffle bag and look inside — you'll find a lighter and a knife. By talking to Sparky you can get some beef jerky. Open the hatch and step out into the jungle.

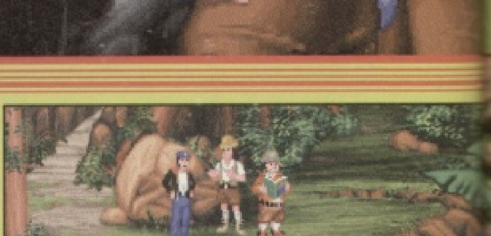
Throw the beef jerky to distract the piranha, then cut the stem of the lily pad using the knife. Reach over and pick up the propeller, and use it to paddle across to the river bank. After listening to Faye's whingeing and whining, walk north up the path and listen to the message from Wedgewood the parrot. After he's flown away, cut down the vine with the knife and head south, then down to the rickety rope bridge. Use the vine to strengthen the bridge and nip across to pick up the banana.

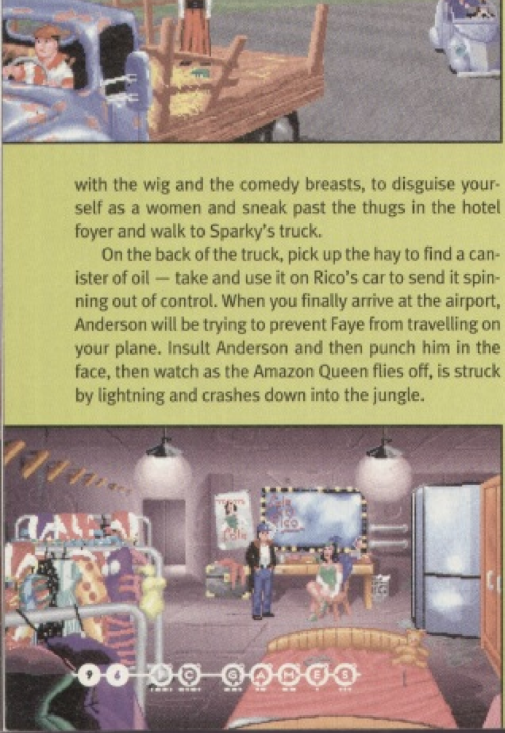
Return to the Amazon Queen, then walk north to the gorilla. Talk to the crazy ape, and convince him he's not real (if you think this is weird, you ain't seen nothing yet — things get even stranger later on). He'll disappear, giving you access to the pinnacle. From the map, walk to Trader Bobs and offer him the beef jerky. In return he'll give you some money. Pick up the vacuum cleaner, then talk to Naomi until she reveals to you that she needs some perfume for her date.

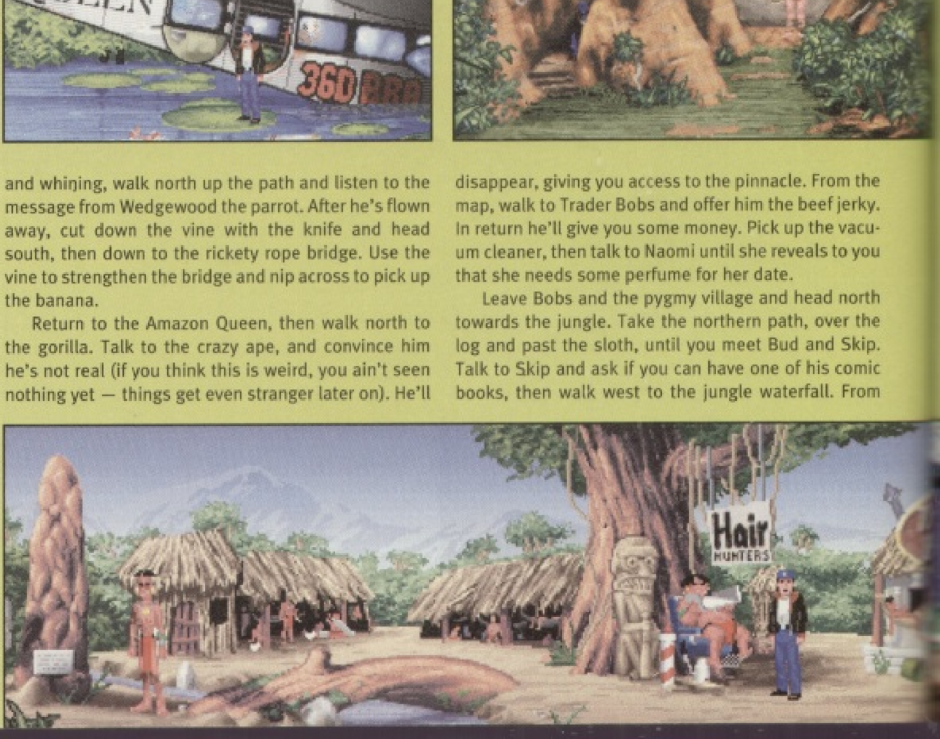
Leave Bobs and the pygmy village and head north towards the jungle. Take the northern path, over the log and past the sloth, until you meet Bud and Skip. Talk to Skip and ask if you can have one of his comic books, then walk west to the jungle waterfall. From











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erfall. From

here, take the right path and walk south past the gorilla dressed as a dinosaur.

At Jimmy and Mary-Lou's jungle salvation centre, give the banana to the monkey to get the coconut in return payment, then talk to Mary-Lou — eventually she'll tell you about her English-to-Pygmy dictionary, and also inform you that her nail file is almost worn out. Walk north and talk to the dinosaur, telling him he's the gorilla you met earlier and that he doesn't really exist. He'll disappear again, allowing you to cross via the log.

On the other side of the log, move north and use the vacuum cleaner on the wasps surrounding the orchid. Take the flower and walk east. Shortly Joe will hear a noise and will hide behind a rock, waiting for an Amazon hunter to open the nearby door. When she disappears, click on the buttons and eventually Joe will be captured...

Rumbled!

Inside the Amazon dungeon, speak to the bedraggled prisoner, asking him about his puppets and causing a scene until he eventually hands one over. At this point Faye will appear and open the cell — follow her up to the throne room. Listen to the Amazon's pleas and agree to help. Leave the temple by the path on the far left of the shower room.

Return to Trader Bobs, giving Bob the orchid and taking the bucket o' nets in return. Now walk to the Amazon Queen's crash site where you'll find Sparky

waiting. Scoop up the perfume floating in the water using the net, then offer Sparky the comic book. Although he doesn't really want the comic (ungrateful git!), take one of his files and walk south to get another banana from the ground.

Make your way to the pinnacle. Choose the jungle from the map screen and walk east to the waterfall. Catch the beetle with your net. Head east then south, then give Mary-Lou the file in return for the English-to-Pygmy dictionary. Walk back to the pinnacle and return to Trader Bobs once again (phew, there's a lot of trekking around in this game!). Give the perfume to Naomi and take the scissors.

Via the pinnacle, make for the the Floda camp. Nab one of the flowers from the display on the right, then return to the jungle depths. Walk north and offer the flower to the sloth. Now use the scissors on the sloth to snip off a handful of hair. Now return to Trader Bobs (again!?!), give the sloth hair to the witch doctor in the pygmy village, then hand her the vacuum cleaner and

the coconut halves. In return she'll give you some rash-curing lotion.

Take this lotion back into the jungle, walking north over the log and then east to where Bud and Skip are still waiting. Talk to Bud before offering him the lotion — he'll then give you a load of coins. Return to Trader Bobs (hmm, this is getting tedious...) and pick up the record found on the back shelf of the shop. Now take off for the Floda Camp.

Covert King

Walk past the guard dog and into the camp foyer. Give the vacuum cleaner to the secretary. Take the right exit into the kitchen and talk to the chef, asking

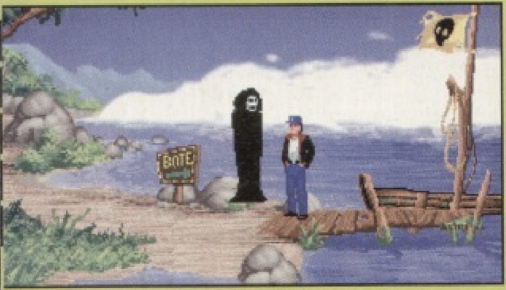
him about the meal he's cooking. Give him the banana and walk right into the dormitory. Open the mail bag and take the letter inside, then open the foot locker and grab the squeaky toy. Return to the kitchen and taking some Cheeze Bitz and dog food.

From the foyer, walk north into the library and play the record on the phonogram. When the desk moves, walk across to the hidden elevator. Walk south and look at the letter before giving it to John, the guard waiting in the corridor. When he reads the letter he'll burst into tears, allowing you to walk into both offices on the left and examine the duty roster.

Back in the corridor, examine each of the rooms (apart from the door guarded by Klunk) until you find

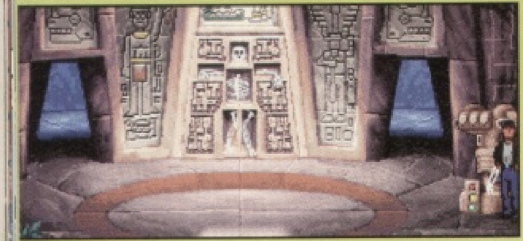
the office with Henry inside. Talk to Henry, telling him he should report for kitchen duty. When he asks who gave the order, reply Colonel Jackson. Now walk into the adjacent room and pick up the book from the table. Use the knife on the book and take the key. Return to the corridor and walk to the fire exit that lies at the end of one of the hallways.

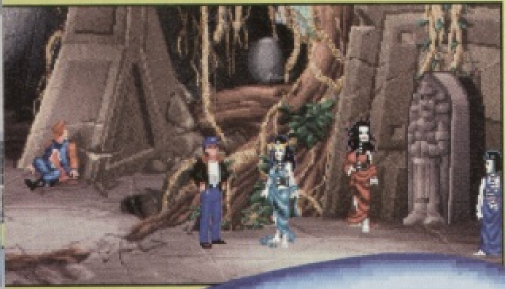
In the lab, take the stairs to the prison and unlock the cell door using the key from the book. After the cutscene, pick up the pencil from the desk, then use the mannequins on the left. Once the guard has gone, ask Azura about the door code then tap the password into the panel on the left wall. Leave the camp and return to the pinnacle...



The Crystal Maze

Walk to the Amazon Fortress and enter the throne room. You'll be awarded a Tyranno horn for rescuing the Princess. The evil Doctor Frank will now appear from nowhere and order Joe to retrieve the Crystal Skull. Go to the jetty via the pinnacle map and talk to the jolly-faced ferryman about fishing. Give him the beetle and he'll then offer to take you to Sloth Island.





Accept, and shortly (after a cutscene) you'll find yourself outside the sacred temple.

Inside, trudge through the door on the left and move each of the decaying corpses on the far wall. Grab the rib cage and the leg bone dropped on the floor, then sneak through the door on the left and budge the remaining three bodies, again collecting the skull and the arm bone that fall to the floor.

Walk back to the temple entrance and use the arm bone on the socket to the left of the room. Use the rib cage in the middle hole on the far wall, the skull on the top crevice and the leg in the bottom hole. Use the money on the coin slot and pull the arm bone — a secret corridor will open. Take the arm bone and step inside the black hole...

Landing on the ground with a thud, Joe is immediately confronted by the temple guardian. Answer his riddle with 'Man' and three doors will open — take the right one. Walk north then east across the bridge, talking to the Floda guard on the way.

In the adjacent anti-chamber, talk to the zombies and convince them to open the sarcophagus. When the coffin's sealed again, pull the mummy wrappings and give them to the zombie woman. When the undead trio have disappeared, open the sarcophagus and take the crown, then cut the vine inside with your knife. Close the coffin and move it to reveal a secret passage.

Walk through and use the scissors on the tree sap, scooping up a handful of the sticky substance before moving on. Rotate the fountain head and take the blue gem from under the water jet. Leave via the west exit, talk to Ian and walk through the left door. Use the hand-puppet on the stone disc, walk east, then east again and use the lever by the floor grating. Joe is sucked into the air and dumped back at the huge statue.

Exit through the statue's mouth and use the stone disc on the spindle, then the gnarled vine on the disc.

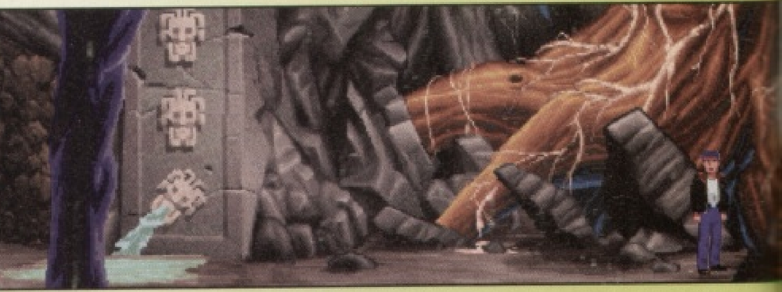
Take the left door then the east exit, and use the loose vines on the pulley to join the two cogs together. Slot the baseball bat into the disc to open the gate on the right, and nip through before it closes. Pull the pick-axe from the ground and leave, closing the gate using the bat as you go.

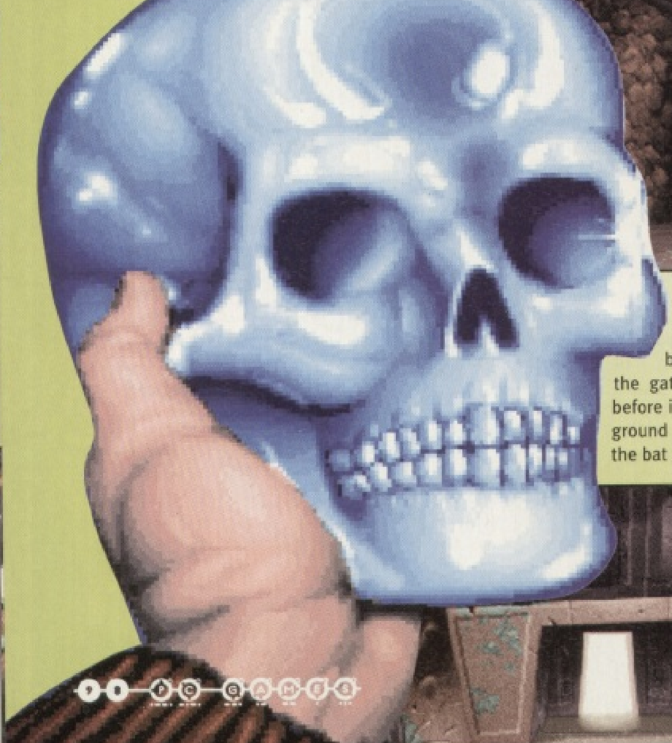
Back at the huge statue, walk into its mouth again. Go to the room at the top via the pulley room. Use the pick-axe to crack open the hole on the right, then again to break the stalactite on the right. Take the flint from the ground and return to the statue room.

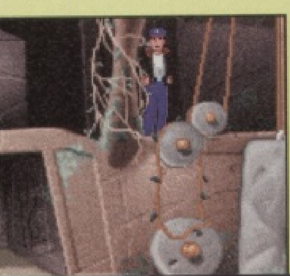
Take the left exit, walk along the pathway and into the snake room. Wrap the mummy bandages around the arm bone to make a torch. Ignite the lighter using the flint and use it to light the torch. Use the torch on the snake to scare it off and trudge through the door it was guarding. Walk west from the temple waterfall and look at the body on the ground. You'll find a bit of stone and an ID card — take them and leave, exiting into the altar room to the south.

Head east into the room where Ian is being held captive. Use the lever on the left, then talk to Ian and ask him to untie the rope at the bottom of the cage. Pull the lever again and Ian will be set free. Leave through the left door (into the room with the door protected by a deadly laser beam) and go west. Run west across the temple bridge and pull the big stick from the stone on the right. Return to the pulley room and dive into the hole leading to the treasure hamber. Prise open the crypt using the big stick and take the death mask from inside.

Return to the central room. Take the right exit, then walk north, east, north (through the hole), west







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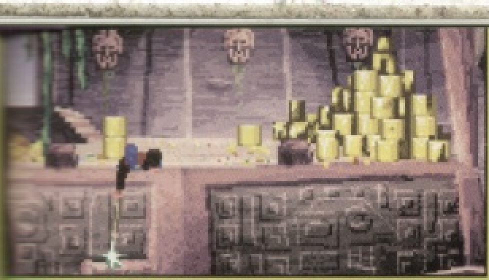
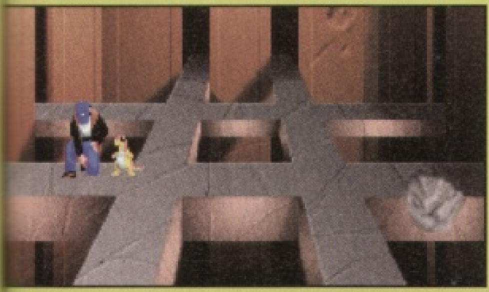


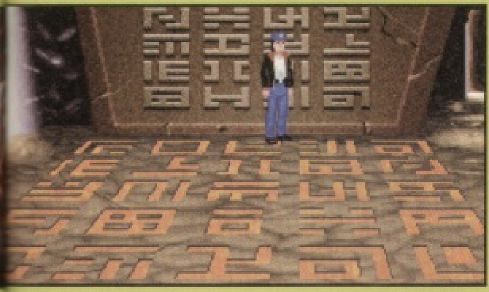
and west again, until you reach the booby-trapped room. Examine Ian's body, taking the chunk of rock before leaving and taking the east exit. Yank the lever to return to the statue chamber. Leave via the west door and return to the lizard statueroom. Polish the death mask and use its shiny surface to reflect the laser beams back at the statues before stepping through the door.

Walk to the opposite exit and into the treasure room, using the sap on the bat to make the end sticky. Use this to grab the green gem from the ledge, then leave walking past the damaged lizard statues, then west over the temple bridge until you reach the Weeping God carving on the wall. Slot both the green and blue gems in the holes and the water will stop, uncovering two exits. Take the one on the right.

Use the knife to scrape the sap from the baseball bat, then stick the two pieces of stone together using the tree goo. Slot the improvised key into the right statue then walk to the newly-uncovered exit and enter the maze. Give the Cheeze Bitz to the Dinorat, and follow him through the maze. Repeat this process until you reach the exit.

Examine the wall markings, then push the panels on either side of the throne. A chair will rise from the ground. Don't sit on it just yet, though — exit through the east door instead. Use the vacuum cleaner to remove the dust from the floor, then solve the puzzle by first pushing one wall marking (two across, four down), then another (three across, three down). A door will open.

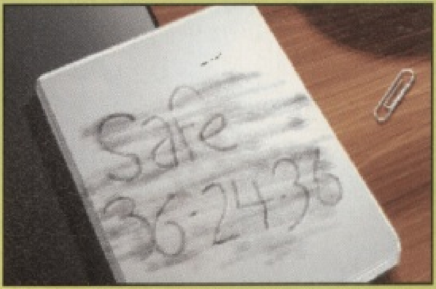




Inside the guardian will reappear. Prove to her that you are the rightful heir to the Crystal Skull by giving her the crown. The door to the Skull will open, allowing you to take it. Leave, return to the throne room and sit on the chair.

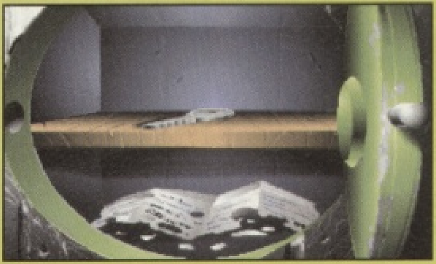
Jurassic Lark

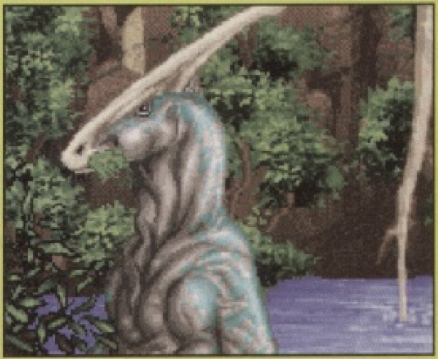
Joe is catapulted out of the temple and lands heavily by the jetty, where he is taken prisoner by the Floda guards. In the cell, take the mug and rattle it against the prison door. Faye and Anderson will then release you. Leave for the lab, taking the super weenie serum from the shelf before exiting into the corridor. Walk right, along the corridor and into the next, opening the door and entering the storeroom. Examine the box and take the can opener, then leave.

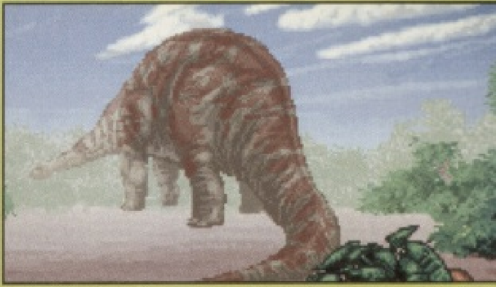


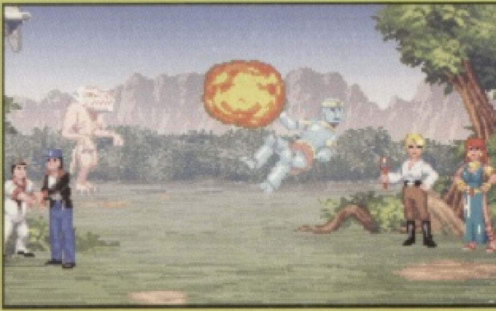
Walk through the corridors until you reach Klunk. Open the dog food with the can opener and sprinkle the super weenie serum on the meat. Give the 'Chef's Surprise' to Klunk, then talk to him and call him a weenie. Joe will punch the knucklehead, knocking him out and allowing you to enter Doctor Frank's office.

Use the pencil on the writing pad to get the safe combination, then head back to the corridor and walk to the room with the single filing cabinet on the far wall. Push the cabinet to uncover a safe and use the scrap of paper to unlock the door. Open the safe and look inside, taking the key and the rocket plans.









Outside in the hallways, take the elevator up into the library and examine the couch. Under the cushion Joe will find a load of money — take this before leaving Floda camp and heading for Trader Bobs. Inside the shop, look at the comic book in your inventory and you'll find a torn page — use the soggy coupon on it to get the Pocket Rocket blueprints. Now use your cash to buy the alcohol from Bob. Fill the rocket pack with the alcohol and walk back to the pinnacle. At the top, use the rocket pack to fly off...

Joe lands in the Valley Of The Mists. Walk off to the right and past the huge dinosaur, up to the clearing in the distance. Trudge past the head and up to the bushes, cutting off a few branches with your knife. Give these to the dinosaur. Walk south then west into the Boneyard. Blow the Tyranno horn to scare off the dinosaur then head east for a final confrontation with the evil Doc.

After the lengthy cutscene, pick up the dino raygun and use it on the Doctor. He'll deflect it back at Faye. Ask her to turn her mirror around. Use the gun on the Doc again — this time the beam will be reflected off the mirror so it hits Sparky. Give Sparky the death mask. Use the gun *again* and finally the beam will strike Doctor Frank, nuking him into oblivion.

Now all you have to do is watch Joe and company laugh as their adventure draws to a close. Could the evil Doctor return, though? For all our sakes, let's hope not.

cheat lab

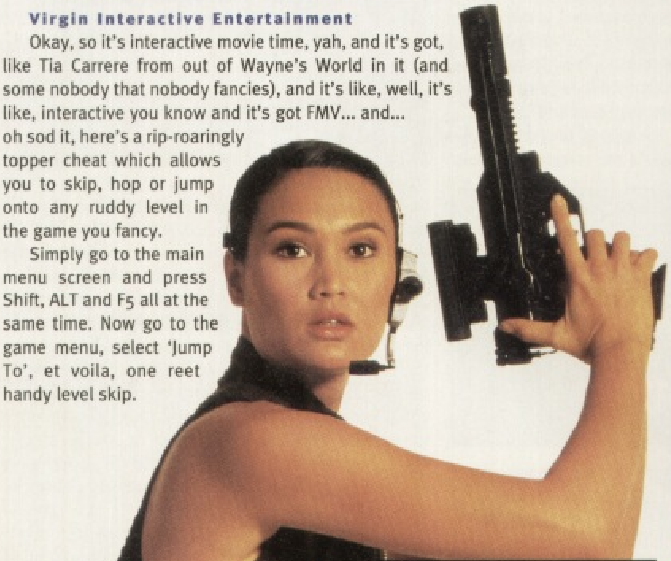
If you're stuck on a game, don't worry. There is no game the Power-Up crew can't beat, mangle and tear to shreds within a matter of minutes. But if you can't be bothered to perfect your skills and want to cheat instead, read on...

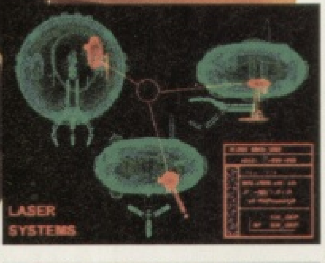
The Daedalus Encounter

Virgin Interactive Entertainment

Okay, so it's interactive movie time, yah, and it's got, like Tia Carrere from out of Wayne's World in it (and some nobody that nobody fancies), and it's like, well, it's like, interactive you know and it's got FMV... and... oh sod it, here's a rip-roaringly topper cheat which allows you to skip, hop or jump onto any ruddy level in the game you fancy.

Simply go to the main menu screen and press Shift, ALT and F5 all at the same time. Now go to the game menu, select 'Jump To', et voila, one reet handy level skip.



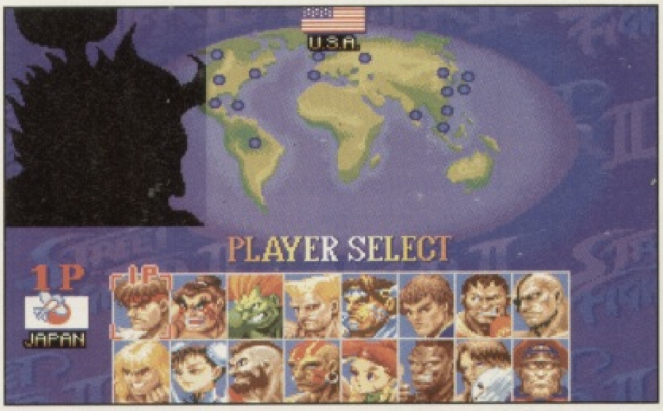


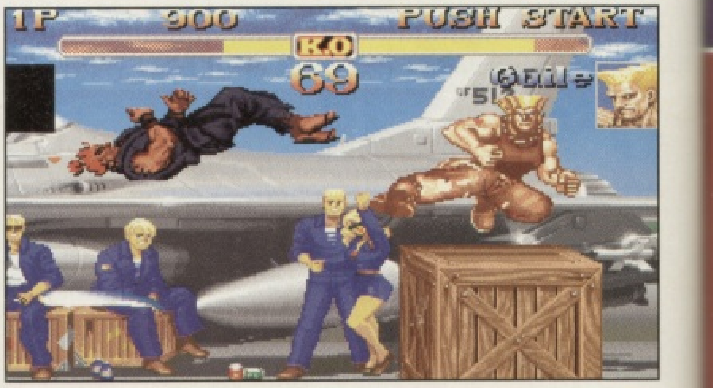
Super Street Fighter II Turbo

GameTek

We've been eagerly awaiting the kick-ass CD-ROM version of Capcom's classic for ages and now it's finally here. What's more, it's blinkin', flippin' excellent! To enhance you're enjoyment that little bit more, we've found out the super-secret code needed to play the game's secret character — Akuma. Hallelujah!

On the character select screen, highlight the following characters for about four seconds apiece — Ryu, then T-Hawk, then Guile, followed by Cammy and finally back to Ryu. Having done this, press all three kick buttons simultaneously. You may have to try this a couple of times but I can assure you it works. Anyway, Ryu's portrait in the top left hand corner will then be replaced by a sinister silhouette. Start the game as normal and Kapow!, you get to transform into the super secret character, Akuma! But what are his special moves I hear you cry? Well he's pretty similar to Ryu but he can also unleash fireballs in mid-ar and perform a werid teleportation move. What's more, he's harder than Ryu! Kersplat!





One Must Fall

Epic Megagames

If you're tired of having sand kicked in your face and every muscle in your body is aching from continuous physical punishment (hmm, sound's interesting!), calm down. Don't bother scouring the classified ads looking for dodgy tablets that 'Make Muscles Instantly', just check out these here cheats for Epic's hard nut beat-'em-up, One Must Fall.

If you want to access a hidden sub-menu offering loads of goodies, try holding down 2,0,9 and 7 on the main options screen. If, on the other hand, you want to fight amidst a load of scrap metal (why? — Dave) simply hold down B, I and G during one of the bouts. Finally, and here's possibly the most useless cheat ever, press and hold R, B, I and N to make debris fall from the top of the screen while you're fighting. Useless, eh?

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Powerdrive

US Gold

"...I just couldn't believe it. There I was, skidding along some dirt track in the middle of nowhere when my front tyre blew. Why me? What have I ever done wrong? So there I was, standing in the pouring rain trying the jack the car up and change the tyre when..."

Having similar problems? Well if you slide off the course in US Gold's zippy Powerdrive, simply enter one of the following codes to start at various stages throughout the game.

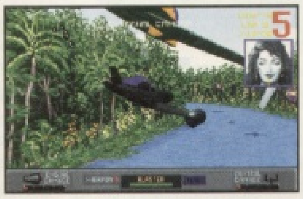
Round 2 (Kenya, Desert)	T1V2;6CF83KV39SQ;
Round 3 (Sweden, Snow)	T4V9KTOLQ;QD=Q7;F
Round 4 (Corsica, Tarmac)	TW2KLHSCJXHHL-XV
Round 5 (Arizona, Desert)	9JV2K9DP4072;S5;G
Round 6 (Finland, Tarmac)	9VV9KQ;JR05Q5J5;Q
Round 7 (Australia, Outback)	ZV9;Y3JS85Q59YYY
Round 8 (Britain, Dirt Track)	6V9KJGSOZ-J7T7XZ
Round 9 (Bonus Stage, Tarmac)	N3V9H3G8VDOBN1Y-F

Slipstream 5000

Gremlin Interactive

If you've entered the gorgeously texture-mapped world of Slipstream where guiding souped-up, superplanes around ten tortuous tracks is the name of the day (and ogling scantily-clad, silicon laden ladies is a secondary consideration), then by now you might have realised that achieving resounding success and glory is no mean feat. Never fear, for PC Games is here with a red hot cheat to ease your path to fame and fortune (and all that other happy crappy)!

To enable you to pick a track, any track, and race to your heart's content while being loaded with an OPEC-member-sized wad of wonga to splash out on weapons, systems and turbos, then simply load the game as normal, go to the main menu screen and type REFINERY. Easy huh?



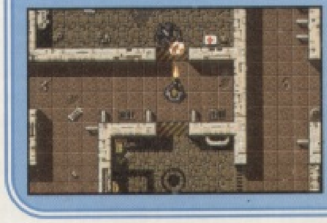
Alien Breed: Tower Assault

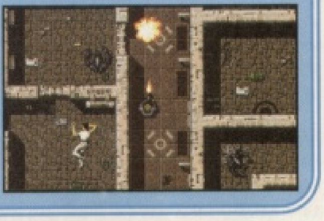
Team 17

They tried their damndest to thwart our carefully-laid plans to give you an easier life when pressing on through this devilishly difficult top-down blaster. They would have done anything to stop us, but no, we overcame. We struggled through and came out victorious and now here they are in all their monochrome glory, the cheats they tried to ban...

Load the game as normal and head straight for the Options screen. Go down to Enter Mission Code and press Space before tapping in one of the following passcodes to whisk you away to your required destination.

Security Zone Three:	FCDBMDEASDCAAADM
Security Zone Three:	FCCELDAAHDCAAAEK
Engineering Level One:	FKBDMDEAFDCAAAEB
Science Level Three:	JGCJNDEAPDCAAACS
Military Level Three:	EPAEMDEBBDCAAAEA
Main Tower Level Two:	LAAPJDAISDCAAACM
Main Tower Level Two:	LACJPDADSDCAAACS
Main Tower Level Four:	HCAPJDADSDCAAADD
Main Tower Level Four:	HCBPSLADSDCAAACB
Stores Level Three:	EJDCPDAASDCAAADG
Civilian Level Three:	EEHBNDAASDCAAADK
Miscellaneous Codes:	FKASMCEABDCAAACI JGAFICEABDCAAAEJ FKANLCEABDCAAADP





cheat lab
Interactive

At PC Games we pride ourselves on our reader services, so if you're stuck on a game, make a note of your problem, stick it in an envelope marked Cheat Lab Interactive and post it to the usual address. As ever, we'll endeavour to help.

Dear Cheat Lab,

In Monkey Island 1, how the hell do I get the bananas?

Stuart Murphy,
Newcastle.

Ah, easy. Go up the foot ladder and you' ll find a see-saw with a rock on it. This is actually a catapult. Next use the spyglass until you' re looking at the banana tree, nudging the see-saw so it turns to faces it. Now use the spyglass to find the big rock, then push it over the ledge. This will fall onto the see-saw, catapulting the other rocks into the air and knocking the ' nanas off the tree!

Dear Cheat Lab,

I played Quest for Glory (So you want to be a Hero) as a fighter and got completely stuck when I was facing Yorick in the Brigand's Hide-out. Won't you please, please help me to find out how to deal with Yorick?

Isfandiary Djafaar,
Birmingham.

Hmm, I' m not entirely sure which bit you' re stuck on but I' ll try and help. If you' re stuck in the Brigand' s hide-out, the only way to get past them is to fight. However, if you' re cornered in the Brigand leader' s chamber, use the dis-spell potion, then go to the desk and pick up the mirror and the healing potion. Leave via the exit behind the treasure chest on the east wall. If you want any more tips, try calling the Sierra helpline on 01734 304004. Calls are charged at standard rate.

Dear Cheat Lab,

I'm stuck on Alone in the Dark 2. I've been into the billiard room and found the secret door, but how do you open it? Also, I have taken the crown from the statue and put it on another, and an amulet appeared in the middle of a sign. The parchment says a door will open but I can't seem to find it. I also can't pick the amulet up. Any ideas?

Ben Rogers,
Leeds.

We are here to serve young Benjamin! The secret door in the billiard room is opened by putting the billiard ball in the Chinese billiard table. You' ll also need the key from the bad guy in the attic. If you can' t pick up the amulet then you have missed something from earlier in the game. This could be any number of things so give Infogrames a call on 0171 738 8199 for more help.

Dear Cheat Lab,

I've been stuck for months on Cannon Fodder, especially on the Phase 'Guerrilla Warfare'. Have you got a cheat or hack of some kind which makes your little squaddie sprites invincible? Could you please, please, please help me? Please.

C. Welhengama,
Old Swan, Liverpool.

PS. Have you got any cheats for Alien Legacy?

Stuck on Cannon Fodder? What sort of soldier are you anyway? Well, as you didn' t give us the specific level number so it' s very difficult to help. However, armed with the level number contact the Virgin helpline on 0891 333 526 and they' ll gladly help. By the way, calls are charged at 36p and 49p a min depending on what time of day you call. As for Alien Legacy, I' m afraid I don' t know of one.

Dear sirs, (Ooh, I've never been called sir before! Dave K.)

I have recently acquired a copy of the F-15 Strike Eagle II, but I keep on running out of weapons. Do you know of any cheats?

R. Ectal,
Hendon.

Well of course we do! Simply press Alt-T, Alt-R, Alt-T to replenish all your weapons. Don' t say we never give you anything!

Dr SPANNER'S

Bits 'n' PCs

Once again the good doctor gets out his techno-stetho-scope and examines the latest gadgets and gew-gaws.

NuReality Vivid 3D Plus

Psst, wanna little black box? No flashing lights (an opportunity missed, if you ask me), but five knobs and a load of sockets to play with. Slap it upside your PC, and it's bound to impress the hell out of your mates. They'll all be clamouring to ask you what it does. And you can get all enigmatic with them, because you won't really know either.

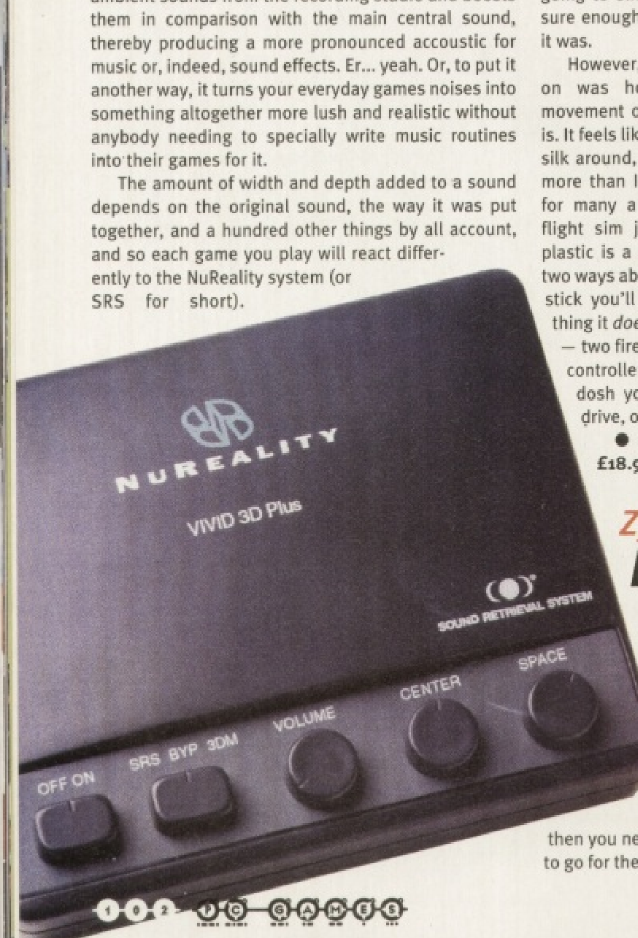
Actually, this particular piece of space-age wizardry serves a real use above and beyond giving your computer the exotic techno-edge over your friends'. It's a sound-based thing. Stick it between your soundcard and the speakers (so not much use if you don't have a soundcard, then) and whack the volume right up to 11.

In technical term, the Vivid 3D Plus takes the stray ambient sounds from the recording studio and boosts them in comparison with the main central sound, thereby producing a more pronounced accoustic for music or, indeed, sound effects. Er... yeah. Or, to put it another way, it turns your everyday games noises into something altogether more lush and realistic without anybody needing to specially write music routines into their games for it.

The amount of width and depth added to a sound depends on the original sound, the way it was put together, and a hundred other things by all account, and so each game you play will react differently to the NuReality system (or SRS for short). Fortunate, then, that you have all those knobs, isn't it? They're the ones that allow you to mess about with the amount of 'centre' and 'space' you add to any given sound.

The verdict? With most computers still having piddly little speakers compared to your average hi-fi, they can do with all the help they can get to get more out of the sound, and the Vivid 3D Plus gives them loads of help. If you want to fit your PC with one widget and one widget only, then this is a serious contender, and if your speakers aren't amplified (what are you, living in the Stone Age?) then you can even invest in the super spunky amp version, which *does* come with flashing lights!

● Manufactured by: NuReality. Distributed by: Leader Media Products. Price: £TBA. Tel: (01992) 503133.

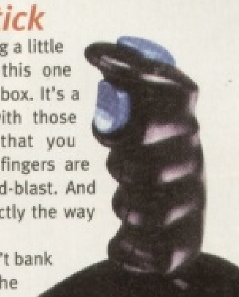


AlfaFire Joystick

I have to admit to being a little bit uncertain about this one when I got it got of the box. It's a very plastic joystick, with those slick plastic buttons that you know in advance your fingers are going to slide off in mid-blast. And sure enough, that's exactly the way it was.

However, what I didn't bank on was how neat the movement of the stick is. It feels like moving silk around, which is more than I can say for many a high-end flight sim joystick. The plastic is a problem, and no two ways about it, but for a cheapo stick you'll find that 'stick' is something it *doesn't* do. Sure, it's a bare-bones item — two fire buttons and an autofire switch, trim controllers and not much more — but for the dosh you could do far worse. Give it a test drive, or fly, or whatever it is you'll be using it for.

● Manufactured by: Golden Image. Price: £18.95. Tel: (0181) 900 9291.



Zy-Fi 2 Pro Speakers

Let's talk funky tunes here for a minute. You get the latest CD-ROM masterpiece by MicroProse or LucasArts, it pumps out its 16-bit, CD-quality soundtrack, and more than likely it'll hit your ears as a slightly sad and bedraggled mess. Why? Your speakers, bud. Check them out. Most of us have fairly crappy speakers at the end of our ú200 wavetable soundcards, and we're not doing our games any favours.

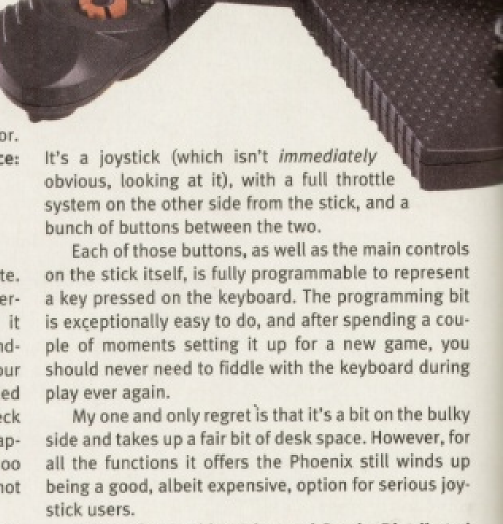
If you really want the 'being there' feel, then you need to do something about it. One option's to go for the Vivid 3D, for certain. Alternatively (or perhaps together with — wow, now that's a combo to die for) go for higher-powered speakers. You can get pairs for over £100 without frills, but with beauties like the Zi-Fi 2 Pros on the market at nearly half the price it's worth stopping before you reach for the 'overdraft' part of the mail-order catalogue.

They sound decently bassy, with good high-end definition, and don't really distort much at higher volume levels. Even my neighbours agree. 'Nuff said.

● Manufactured by: Zytech. Price: £59.99. Tel: (01386) 769400.

Phoenix Joystick

It looks like it belongs on the set of Star Trek, and it's a little bit on the daunting side when you first get one attached to your PC, but the Phoenix is, in fact, a dandy bit of kit.



It's a joystick (which isn't *immediately* obvious, looking at it), with a full throttle system on the other side from the stick, and a bunch of buttons between the two.

Each of those buttons, as well as the main controls on the stick itself, is fully programmable to represent a key pressed on the keyboard. The programming bit is exceptionally easy to do, and after spending a couple of moments setting it up for a new game, you should never need to fiddle with the keyboard during play ever again.

My one and only regret is that it's a bit on the bulky side and takes up a fair bit of desk space. However, for all the functions it offers the Phoenix still winds up being a good, albeit expensive, option for serious joystick users.

● Manufactured by: Advanced Gravis. Distributed by: Zye Technology. Price: £119.99. Tel: (01293) 538666.

US
Granny
Rehearsals
PASSPORT

Xplora 1^{CD}

Peter Gabriel, eh? Bless his cotton socks. He's out of his tree, I'm sure of it. And so will you be (sure, that is) when you get a good look at Xplora 1.

What exactly is going on here? It's a spooky mish-mash of pages full of wonderous sounds and visuals, all loosely based around the 'Peter Gabriel: Past And Present' theme, but with no discernable structure. Traditional multimedia it isn't, but it's a joy to just... well, explore, I guess. Let the whole experience wash over you, hunt out secret areas, and generally have fun to your heart's content.

It's always nice to see original stuff turn up when it's nicely done. Xplora 1 fits the category perfectly.

● **Published by: Mirage. Price: £49.95. Tel: (01260) 299909.**

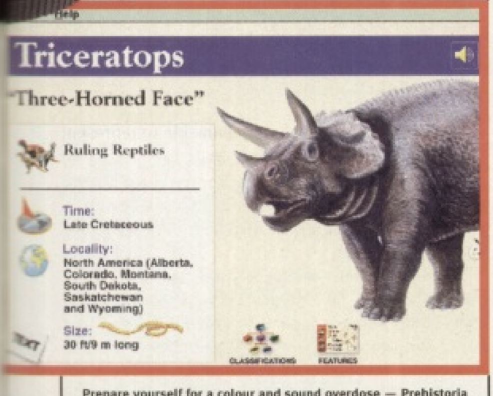
Prehistoria^{CD}

Sixty-five million years ago, when dinosaurs ruled the Earth, is a bit of a long time. So long, in fact, that nobody really knows a whole heap about those infamous reptiles who sold so many Jurassic Park videos for Stephen Spielberg. There's loads of speculation though, naturally, and it's this speculation that Prehistoria goes a bundle on.

Unlike other dino-references available on CD-ROM, this one covers almost every bit of ground there is to cover concerning prehistoric life. Not just the big lizards, but the plants, the whole environment, and every single theory you could possibly think of. There are pages giving the basic low-down on 'Who's Who' in the dino-world for sure, but also pages explaining how scientists think they moved and ate and reproduced, with great little animations running throughout the whole thing.

It's brilliantly presented and incredibly captivating, and overall Prehistoria is stunningly done and comes highly recommended.

● **Published by: Software Toolworks. Price: £39.99. Tel: (01444) 246333.**



Time:
Late Cretaceous

Locality:
North America (Alberta, Colorado, Montana, South Dakota, Saskatchewan and Wyoming)

Size:
30 ft/9 m long

Prepare yourself for a colour and sound overdose — Prehistoria is bubbling over with both.

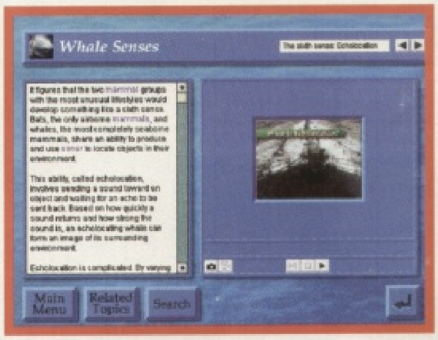
In The Company Of Whales^{CD}

For those of you still dishless and trapped with terrestrial TV alone, let me explain that the Discovery Channel is a satellite outfit dedicated to broadening our minds in a documentary and educational program kind of way. In the field of wildlife, they go out and film anything that David Attenborough hasn't gotten round to, and most things he has. In general they make very nice films.

What they are now doing with those films, or so it would seem, is turning them into CD-ROMs with the original footage being condensed into tiny little windows on your PC, and then a sprinkling of interactivity thrown in for good measure.

In The Company Of Whales has actually got some seriously good stuff in it, but the interface lets it down and the small video area has you frustrated and wishing for a video of Trials Of Life and good old-fashioned telly. Why is this not an MPEG product? Who knows?

● **Published by: Computer Bookshops. Price: £44.95. Tel: (0121) 706 1250.**



It figures that the two mammal groups with the most unusual lifestyles would develop something like a sixth sense. Bats, the only airborne mammals, and whales, the most completely seaborne mammals, share an ability to produce and use sonar to locate objects in their environment.

This ability, called echolocation, involves sending a sound toward an object and waiting for an echo to be sent back. Based on how quickly a sound returns and how strong the sound is, an echolocating whale can form an image of its surrounding environment.

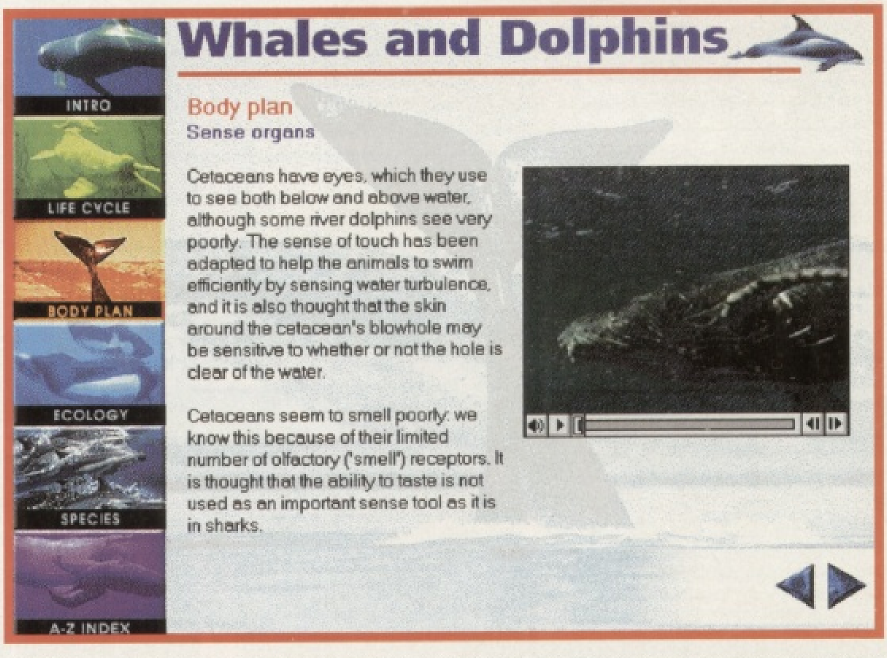
Echolocation is complicated. By varying

Why not check out In The Company Of Whales for all those things you ever wanted to know about cetacean life, like "What exactly *is* a cetacean when it's at home?"

Messing About On The Water

Looking at the way two separate companies have tackled the same subject shows just how diverse all this multimedia malarkey can get. Take these here whale discs, for example. MDI are a company with a solid background in multimedia, and so you'd expect a lovely interface and pretty texty parts as well as pictures and sounds.

However, The Discovery Channel are a different kettle of aquatic mammals altogether. They're film makers, so it's hardly going to be the shock of the century that they've gone heavy on the video footage and sent the film crews out in the corporate dinghy while keeping all the interface business to a minimum. The question is, which works better? Read the reviews and judge for yourself.



Body plan

Sense organs

Cetaceans have eyes, which they use to see both below and above water, although some river dolphins see very poorly. The sense of touch has been adapted to help the animals to swim efficiently by sensing water turbulence, and it is also thought that the skin around the cetacean's blowhole may be sensitive to whether or not the hole is clear of the water.

Cetaceans seem to smell poorly: we know this because of their limited number of olfactory ("smell") receptors. It is thought that the ability to taste is not used as an important sense tool as it is in sharks.

MDI's Whales and Dolphins has more details than I thought it was legal or morally decent to distribute about the personnal body organs of your average sperm whale. What's more, Whales And Dolphins has it all in glorious technicolour.

Whales And Dolphins^{CD}

Well, hello. What have we got here? It's a multimedia product about whales (and dolphins — mustn't forget the dolphins) by an actual multimedia company. And it shows.

MDI have been doing multimedia gubbins out of their Surrey offices for as long as the word 'multimedia' has been in the dictionary. Although the style of each of their products tends to be fairly similar, MDI are onto a good thing so why on Earth change it? In the case of Whales And Dolphins it works very well indeed, making it easy to wade through the information and generally find your way around. What's more, the facts are accompanied by detailed picture, so it's both pleasant to look at and informative.

Ironically, because they have more experience in the field video compression on the PC, their video footage is far better quality than the Discovery Channel managed, too. Excellent, huh?

● **Published by: MDI Price. £34.99. Tel: (01252) 737630.**

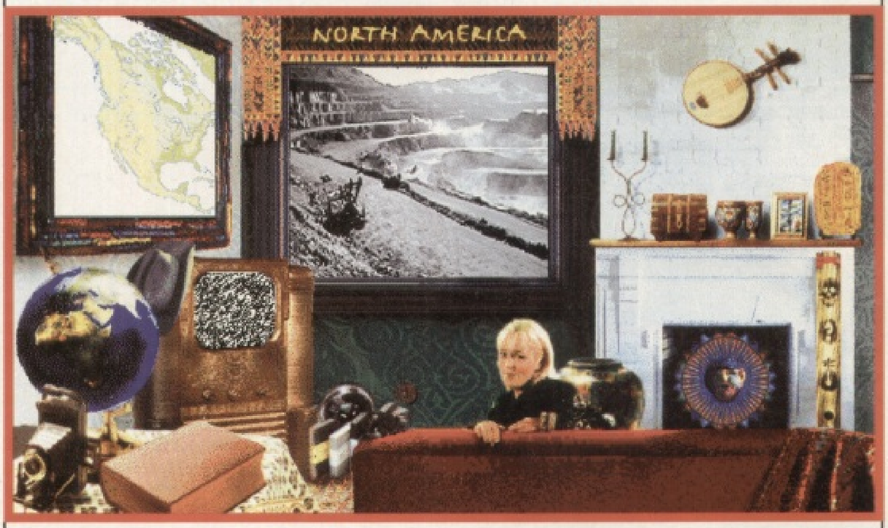
One Tribe^CD

Dudes and dudettes, this is wannabe Californian CD-ROMism at its highest art form. If One World felt like it was being cynically marketed at the MTV audience then One Tribe, its sister program, makes no bones about it. It *is* MTV on CD-ROM, as presented by one of their biggest VJs, Pip Dann. And it's great because of it.

One Tribe is no messing, in your face, pure and unashamed multimedia brashness. Images and video get thrown at you almost before you've had a chance to settle down in front of the computer, while ethnically accurate music funks the whole thing along. All the tribes, including our very own, are covered by a mix of text and graphic and sound. Which is handy really, since this is supposed to be multimedia, after all.

Yep, you can't fault it for being interesting to the last. Your senses might be sore for a while afterwards, but go for a quick lie down in a dark room and you'll be fine. After that, you'll be back for more.

● **Published by: Virgin. Price: £59.99. Tel: (0181) 747 9080.**



One Tribe, as hosted by the luscious Pip Dann, who actually *does* star on MTV. A coincidence? NOT!

One World^CD

What on earth is all this hype about multimedia for? Give me a multimedia CD-ROM, and I'll show you a waste of fifty-odd quid. Nobody needs this stuff, surely?

Well no, but take a butcher's at One World and you'll be sorely tempted to slap your money on the counter there and then. And all for what? A blooming atlas, that's what! Like you would have rushed out to buy a new atlas tomorrow if it was a good old traditional book. Now come on, be honest, you wouldn't, would you? No, I didn't really think so.

So why One World? Because it's multimedia, that's why, and fairly good stuff at that. All the atlassy maps are there, but there are also masses of photos and text about each place to boot, and a few groovy sounds too. That's what makes it interesting and fun, as well as (albeit marginally) useful.

One World is the good old-fashioned household atlas for the MTV generation. No more dusty tomes here, I can tell you.

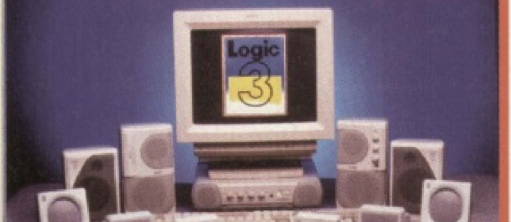
So what if it's completely twee and totally clear that it's a creation of the marketing men, who saw a chance to sell the latest techno-funk to the kids by making it hip and happening in an MTV kind of way. Who cares, as long as it's good?

● **Published by: Virgin. Price: £44.99. Tel: (0181) 747 9080.**

Techno-Babble!

● It seems like the world's gone completely speaker-crazy recently! Apart from the absolutely fabulous Zy-Fi 2s the Doctor's been reviewing this issue, we've had stacks of the little blighters landing on our doormat from Logic 3, who've got a completely new range called Screan Beat to suit any pocket and any ear-drum.

The range starts with the SB205s at 10W which cost a very reasonable £14.99, and goes right up to the whopping SB270s which pack a mighty 70W punch that even the neighbours'll hear. Each set is internally amplified and fully magnetically shielded. For more information, why not give Logic 3 a shout on (0181) 900 0024.



Logic 3's attractively-priced range of speakers cater for low-budget buyers and gamers looking for the ultimate in sound technology.

Ever fancied playing multi-player games but don't have access to a serial link or network? Who needs one with Golden Images' Alfa Twin joystick splitter. Super Street Fighter II Turbo will never be the same again!

● Got mates you want to play games with, and only one PC to play on? Network, schmetwork, that's what we say on PC GAMES. Just get a splitter from Golden Image (tel: (0181) 900 9291). Called the AlfaTwin, all you need to do is shell out the necessary £24.95, plug it in, and suddenly one joystick port becomes (wait for it) two joystick ports! Is that cool or what?

On the other hand, if you're just plain fed up with constantly plugging and unplugging different joysticks and gamepads then you could do far worse than to give Paperlogic a buzz on (0171) 636 7099 and ask them about their superb Joyswitch, which has room for a whopping four joysticks at once as well as two sets of pedals. What's the damage? A snip at around £47.00.

● Itching to cruise down the Information Superhighway, and all you've been able to do so far is thumb a ride on your mate's modem for a quick spin round the corner? Don't fret, 'cos the word is that now you can get the last word in turbo comms kit for bargain basement prices, curtosy of Hayes, who are *the* modem people. They're flogging the all-new Accura 28.8Kbps (kicks butt pretty swiftish) at a wildly unbelievable £249, with the 14.4Kbps at £179. Distribution's through Frontline on (01256) 463344.

Hayes
ACCURA 144 + FAX144

If you're tight on cash but want to surf the net, check out Hayes' nifty Accura bundles that start from just £179!

● What's the hot technology of the month? Well two-in-one graphics and MPEG cards seem to be all the rage these days, so forget spending over £300 for a bristeringly fast graphics card to play games on and around the same again for an MPEG decoder to get full-motion video.

There are three companies which are offering the two-in-one card; first there's Orchid's Kelvin MPEG, while Sigma Designs have their RealMagic Rave. Last but by no means least there's SPEA's Showtime card. Less hassle, less dosh, and with that more MPEG products are on their way for sure now. Their telephone numbers? (01256) 479898, (01279) 442842, and (01844) 261886, respectively.

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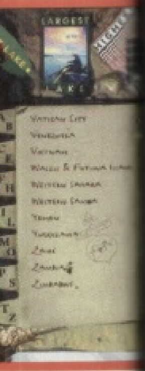

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Issue 4

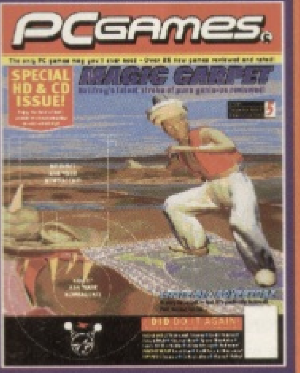
Yes! We managed to find some more back issues of Issue 4 in the old water tank behind the shed — and now we're offering them to you! We went Doom 2 crazy this issue, interviewed Mark Hamill and gave you Wacky Wheels and Transport Tycoon on the disks.

PCGAMES
2 DISKS!
DOOM 2
Smashin' or cash-in!
SYSTEM SHOCK

HD ONLY

Issue 5

In our first CD issue, we took a long hard look at Magic Carpet, LBA, Transport Tycoon and Aces Of The Deep. And, if that wasn't enough, we previewed Loadstar and DID's Chopper. On the disk we had The Clue! and on the CD there was Retribution and LBA.


PCGAMES
SPECIAL HD & CD ISSUE!
MAGIC CARPET
DID DO IT AGAIN

Issue 6

In Issue 6 we sank our teeth into Ecstatica, took to the skies with US Navy Fighters and fumbled our way through Kyrandia 3. We also previewed every game coming your way in '95 and on the disks and the CD we featured Flight of the Amazon Queen, NASCAR Racing, Magic Carpet and Cyberwar.

PCGAMES
Under a Killing Moon
The finished game reviewed inside!
Ecstatica
CD-ROM EDITION!

HD ONLY

Issue 7

You missed Issue 7? Why? We had the first review of Origin's Wing Commander 3 and finally got to grips with Rise Of The Robots. We also took a peek at 3D-Ware and previewed Alone 3 and Dungeon Master 2, while on the disks we featured Bullfrog's Tube and 450Mb of The Making Of Wing 3!

PCGAMES
COMMANDER BLOOD
WING 3 COMMANDER
EXCLUSIVE! COMPLETE GAME!

HD ONLY

Issue 8

Id Software proved that they are the 3D kings with Heretic. Not only could you play the Heretic demo but we gave you the review, as well as analysis of KA-50 Hokum and EarthSiege. We also peeked at UFO 2, Sim Isle and Frontier 2. And disks? Well, we had Heretic, US Navy Fighters and Descent to keep you happy...

PCGAMES
FIRST REVIEW!
HERETIC
WINGS OF GLORY
CES!

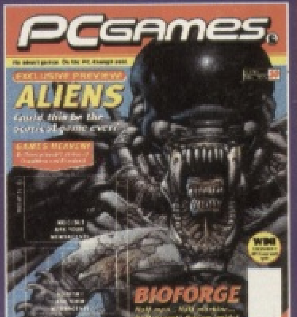
Issue 9

X-COM (or UFO 2) rose from the depths to grace our cover. "It's wet and it's wild!" screamed the coverline — and for once it wasn't wrong. Also wild (if not so wet) were Discworld, Psycho Pinball and Descent. On the discs there were demos of X-COM, Prem. Manager 3. Dark Forces, Alone 3 and Wings Of Glory.

PCGAMES
WORLD EXCLUSIVE!
UFO
TERROR FROM THE DEEP
It's wet and it's wild!
WIN!
DARK FORCES

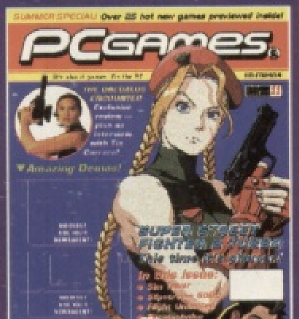
Issue 10

In another PC GAMES exclusive, we took the wraps off Cryo's Aliens. We also previewed hot new titles from Gremlin and reviewed Mortal Kombat 2, Lost Eden and BioForge. On the HDs there were demos of ClockWerx, Stardust, while on the CD there was BioForge, Lost Eden and Full Throttle.


PCGAMES
EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW
ALIENS
GAMES HEAVEN!
BIOFORGE

Issue 11

The luscious Cammy from Super SF2 Turbo (oh, and Tia Carrere from The Daedalus Encounter) graced this month's cover, and both games were reviewed inside. On the disks there were playable demos of CyClones, Darker, SSF2Turbo, Slipstream 5000, Tank Commander and many more.


SUMMER SPECIAL! Over 25 hot new games previewed inside!
PCGAMES
THE DAEDALUS ENCOUNTER
Amazing Demos!
SUPER STREET FIGHTER II TURBO
In this issue:
FULL THROTTLE

Make it so!

You want more Star Trek stuff? Well here's a taster of just some of the merchandising currently flooding the market.

Enterprise Figurine

This Enterprise diorama is perfect for adorning that oh-so-sparse mantelpiece.

Price £59.99

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Dogged by Klingons? Wipe 'em out with this variable setting Next Generation Phaser complete with realistic sound effects!

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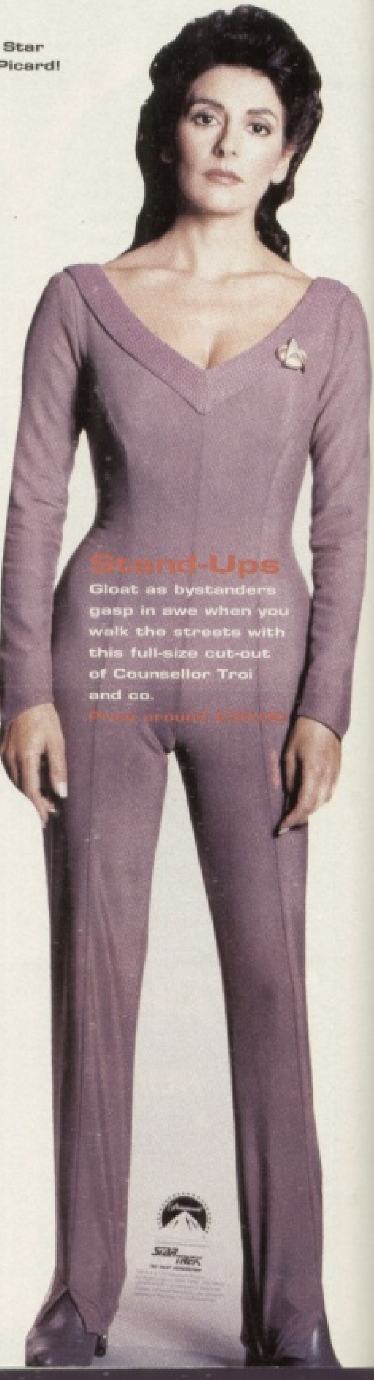
Forget unwanted spillage with this authentic Star Trek super-stable mug as used by Jean-Luc Picard!

Price £Varies



Stand-Ups

Gloat as bystanders gasp in awe when you walk the streets with this full-size cut-out of Counsellor Troi and co.

Price around £[illegible]

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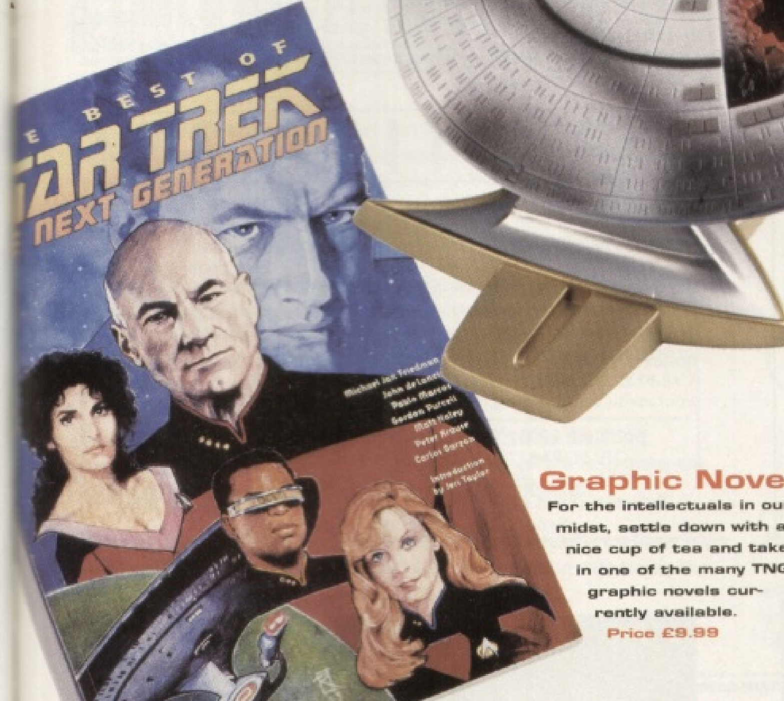

Graphic Novel

For the intellectuals in our midst, settle down with a nice cup of tea and take in one of the many TNG graphic novels currently available.
Price £9.99

Klingon Tie

Forget Armani, this tie is the latest fashion accessory to grace the catwalks (or so Dave Upchurch reckons)!
Price £12.99

Bird Of Prey Figurine

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PC Beginners Pack, £39.95, two books, video and shareware collection, ISBN: 1-873308-44-2.

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This book is about experimenting, planning, strategy and lateral thinking; even deviousness; sometimes cheating! It investigates new approaches and angles everyone can try and provides a complete guide to getting the best fro this classic game. You'll pick up ideas and sharpen your wits in the following departments: tactics, finance and ordinances; disasters and pollution; power generation and transport; hints, tips and cheating (only a bit!). There's a full question and answer section and plenty of screenshots to put you right on track. All done with wry humour and observations on how computer simulations can mirror real life, and vice versa! *Includes full coverage of Urban Renewal Kit and exclusive disk offer containing game scenarios.*

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PCGAMES

MAGAZINE READER SURVEY

Fill out our *important* Reader Survey and you could WIN this month's TOP TEN GAMES!

Dear PC Games Reader,

Welcome to the annual PC Games Reader Survey. Each issue we try to make PC Games a better and better magazine. And to help us we would ask you to please spare the time to answer the questions on the next couple of pages. The more we understand about you, our readers, the better we can make the magazine for you.

It is very important to us that we know as much as possible about your PC habits and the kinds of machines you have - so we can make PC Games as useful to you as possible. The technology moves on so fast, and the Reader Survey is the fastest way to find out what information you will want from us over the coming months.

We appreciate that the questionnaire may look a little daunting. However, we do ask you for your help. And since all the responses are of the 'tick-box' type the form is quite quick to complete.

Oh, and as a bit of a transparently obvious bribe, actually, we have £500 worth of latest games to give away to one lucky person who sends in a completed Survey whose name we pick out of the hat...

Thanking you in advance, for your time and effort.

In return, the information you give will enable us to make PC Games just simply better and better!!

Yours sincerely,

David Upchurch

David Upchurch
EDITOR

PS If you do not wish to damage your copy, of course, a photocopy of the pages and your answers is just as good!

When you have completed Survey Form, please send it ASAP to: PC Games Reader Survey, Emap Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

ABOUT YOU

1 Are you:

Male	☐	Female	☐

2 How old are you?

Under 8	☐	8	☐	9	☐	10	☐	11	☐
12	☐	13	☐	14	☐	15	☐	16	☐
17-19	☐	20-23	☐	24-29	☐	30-34	☐	35-44	☐
45-54	☐	55 or over	☐						

3 What do you do?

Full time employment	☐
Part time employment	☐
Unemployed	☐
Higher Education (University, etc.)	☐
6th Form/6th Form College	☐
Secondary school	☐
Junior school	☐

Other: ....

4 What do you do in your spare time? Please rate how keen you are on each of the following (10 = hyper keen, 1 = couldn't care less)

Play computer games	☐	Play sports	☐
Watch TV	☐	Watch satellite TV	☐
Watch sports	☐	Watch videos	☐
Listen to music	☐	Listen to the radio	☐
Play arcade games	☐	Go to the cinema	☐

Other: ....

5 On average how much time do you spend using your PC every week?

Less than 1 hour	☐	1-2 hours	☐
2-4 hours	☐	4-6 hours	☐
6-8 hours	☐	8-10 hours	☐
10-20 hours	☐	More than 20 hours	☐

6 How do you usually use your PC?

On my own	☐	With a friend	☐
With a group of us	☐	With my family	☐

7 When you are using your PC, how much of that time, as a proportion, is spent playing games - rather than doing other stuff?

I spend 75-100% of my PC time playing games	☐
I spend between 50-75% of my PC time playing games	☐
I spend between 25-50% of my PC time playing games	☐
I spend between 0-25% of my PC time playing games	☐

8 What is your annual income?

Under £1,200	☐	£1,200 to £6,000	☐
£6,000-£9,999	☐	£10,000 - 14,999	☐
£15,000-19,999	☐	£20,000-29,999	☐
£30,000-39,999	☐	£40,000 or more	☐

9 Which of the following do you regularly buy?

CDs	☐	Tapes	☐
Videos	☐	Clothes	☐
Shoes/Trainers	☐	Sweets	☐
Crisps	☐	Drinks	☐

Take-away food ☐ Books ☐
Comics ☐
Something else, namely:...

10 Do you have a bank/building society account?

Yes ☐ No ☐
If you do, who is it with?...

11 Do you use or have access to a PC at work?

Yes ☐ No ☐

12 Do you spend, authorise spend or influence spend on PC hardware, software or services at your work?

Yes ☐ No ☐

ABOUT YOUR PC

13 Which of the following describes your technical competence on the PC?

Expert ☐ Competent ☐ Complete beginner ☐
Beginning to get the hang of most things ☐

14 Which of the following PCs do you own/use (if more than one please tick the machine which you most actively use)?

286 ☐ 386sx ☐ 386dx ☐
486sx ☐ 486dx ☐ 486dx/2 ☐
Pentium ☐ Other ....

15 What is the clock speed of the processor inside your PC (if you know it)?

16MHz ☐ 25MHz ☐ 33MHz ☐ 50MHz ☐
66MHz ☐ 90MHz ☐ Other:......................................

16 Do you plan to upgrade your PC in the next 12 months?

Yes ☐ No ☐

17 If you answered Yes to Q13, what do you intend to upgrade to?

286 ☐ 386sx ☐ 386dx ☐
486sx ☐ 486dx ☐ 486dx/2 ☐
Pentium ☐ Other ....

18 How much memory (RAM) does your PC have?

0.5Mb ☐ 1Mb ☐ 2Mb ☐ 4Mb ☐ 8Mb ☐ 16Mb or more ☐

19 Do you intend to upgrade the memory capacity of your current PC in the next 12 months?

Yes ☐ No ☐

20 What size hard drive does your PC have?

Under 60Mb ☐ 60-180Mb ☐ 180-300Mb ☐ 300Mb or more ☐

21 What type of disk drive does your PC have (please tick all that apply)?

5.25 inch floppy ☐ 3.5 inch floppy (low density) ☐
3.5 inch floppy (high density) ☐ CD-Rom drive (single-speed) ☐
CD-Rom drive (double-speed) ☐ CD-Rom drive (quad-speed) ☐

22 What type of graphics card does your PC have?

CGA ☐ EGA ☐ VGA ☐
SVGA ☐ Other.........................

23 What kind of soundcard do you have installed?

None ☐ Adlib ☐ Sound Blaster ☐
Roland ☐ Gravis Ultrasound ☐ Other......................................

24 Which version of DOS do you have?

MS-DOS 4 or earlier ☐ MS-DOS 5 ☐
MS-DOS 6 ☐ MS-DOS 6.2 ☐
DR-DOS ☐

25 Do you use Windows?

Yes ☐ No ☐

26 If you answered Yes to Q23, which version of Windows do you use?

Windows 2 ☐ Windows 286 ☐
Windows 3 ☐ Windows 3.1 ☐
Windows for WorkGroups ☐ Windows 95 ☐

27 Which of the following peripherals do you own, or intend to purchase or upgrade within the next 12 months?

	Own	Intend to purchase/upgrade
Extra disk drive	☐	☐
Monitor	☐	☐
Video digitiser	☐	☐
Laser printer	☐	☐
Ink-jet printer	☐	☐
Dot-matrix printer	☐	☐
Other printer	☐	☐
Modem	☐	☐
Genlock	☐	☐
Sound sampler	☐	☐
Mouse	☐	☐
Accelerator	☐	☐
Emulator	☐	☐
Graphics board	☐	☐
FMV capability	☐	☐
Networking interface	☐	☐
PCMCIA drive	☐	☐

28 Which of the following types of software do you own/use, or intend to purchase or upgrade within the next 12 months?

	Own/use	Internd to purchase/upgrade
Word processor	☐	☐
Spreadsheet	☐	☐
Database	☐	☐
Painting program	☐	☐
Drawing program	☐	☐
DTP	☐	☐
Comms program	☐	☐
Internet software	☐	☐
Sound sampler	☐	☐
MIDI sequencer	☐	☐
Programming language	☐	☐
Multimedia	☐	☐
Image processing	☐	☐
Rendering software	☐	☐
Grpahics utility	☐	☐
PD software	☐	☐

Other utility (own), namely:...
Other utility (intend to purchase), namely:..

29 Is your PC linked to a HiFi or external speakers?

Yes ☐ No ☐

30 How much do you plan to spend on hardware and software (all types) in the next 12 months?

	Hardware	Software
Nothing	☐	☐
Under £60	☐	☐
£60-£119	☐	☐
£120-£299	☐	☐
£300-£599	☐	☐
£600-£899	☐	☐
£900-£1199	☐	☐
£1200-£1799	☐	☐
£1800-£2399	☐	☐
£2400-£3599	☐	☐
£3600 and over	☐	☐

31 Apart from games, what else do you use your PC for?

DTP ☐
Multimedia ☐
Music (incl midi & sampling) ☐
Graphics and animation ☐
Word processing ☐
Education ☐
Programming ☐
Personal finance ☐
Business spreadsheets/accounts ☐
Comms/Internet etc ☐
Video/movie applications ☐
Reference information retrieval ☐
Business presentations ☐

32 What type of PC games are you interested in?

Arcade style (shoot 'em ups) ☐
Board/puzzle (chess/Tetris etc) ☐
Flight sims ☐
Graphic adventures ☐
Platform games ☐
Role playing/strategy games ☐
Sports sims ☐
'Interactive movies' ☐

33 Apart from your PC, which of the following other machines do you (1) own or have access to or (2) intend to purchase in the next 12 months?

	1: Own or /have access	2: Intend to purchase		1: Own or /have access	2: Intend to purchase
Commodore Amiga	☐	☐	Acorn Archimedes	☐	☐
PC Engine	☐	☐	3DO	☐	☐
Neo Geo	☐	☐	Philips CD-i	☐	☐
Sony Playstation	☐	☐	Sega Saturn	☐	☐
Sega 32X	☐	☐	Sega Mega-CD	☐	☐
Sega Megadrive	☐	☐	Sega Game Gear	☐	☐
Sega Master System	☐	☐	Nintendo SuperNES	☐	☐
Nintendo GameBoy	☐	☐	Nintendo NES	☐	☐
Atari Jaguar	☐	☐	Atari ST	☐	☐
Apple Macintosh	☐	☐	Apple PowerMac	☐	☐

34 How many games do you own?

None ☐
2-5 ☐
11-25 ☐
More than 50 ☐
One ☐
6-10 ☐
26-50 ☐

35 On average how many software programs (games or utilities) do you buy?

Never buy software ☐
One every three months ☐
One per month ☐
Three per month ☐
Five per month ☐
A couple every year ☐
One every couple of months ☐
Two per month ☐
Four per month ☐
More than five ☐

36 How many software programs (games/utilities) do you get given (as presents etc)?

None ☐
One every three months ☐
One per month ☐
Over two per month ☐
A couple every year ☐
One every couple of months ☐
Two per month ☐

37 How many different games do you play in a month - either of your own, at a friend's or elsewhere?

None ☐
6-10 ☐
15-20 ☐
1-5 ☐
11-15 ☐
Over 20 ☐

38 How long have you been using a computer?

A month or less ☐
3-6 months ☐
12-18 months ☐
2-3 years ☐
4-6 years ☐
1-3 months ☐
6-12 months ☐
18 months - 2 years ☐
3-4 years ☐
Over 6 years ☐

39 In order of preference, which of the following are the most important things that help you decide which software to buy? Please rate each factor in importance between 1 and 5, where 5 is 'essential' and 1 is 'hardly important at all'.

Computer magazine review ___
Computer magazine preview ___
Recommendation by a friend ___
Advert in a computer magazine ___
Editorial coverage in other types of magazine ___
Saw it on TV ___
Saw an advert on TV ___
Saw a poster ___
Saw it at an exhibition ___
Shop demonstration ___
Rent to try out first ___
Something else, namely:..

40 Where do you normally buy your PC equipment and software?

Dixons ☐
Woolworths ☐
Comet ☐
Toys R Us ☐
Microbyte Games ☐
HMV ☐
Rumbelows ☐
John Menzies ☐
Blockbuster Video ☐
Tandy ☐
Mail order ☐
Asda ☐
Virgin ☐
Argos ☐
Boots ☐
WH Smith ☐
Our Price ☐
Currys ☐
Future Zone ☐
Game ☐
Ritz ☐
Beatties ☐
Local specialist shop ☐
PC World ☐
Somewhere else..

41 What you think of the software publishers (please tick one box only per publisher)?

Publisher	Good	OK	Poor	Don't know	Never heard of them
21st Century	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Acclaim	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Accolade	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Activision	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Adventuresoft	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Anco	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Audiogenic	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
AutoDesk	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Borland	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
BMG	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bullfrog	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Codemasters	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Core Design	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Corel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cyberdreams	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Domark	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Electronic Arts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Elite	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Empire	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
GameTek	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Grand Slam	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gremlin Interactive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
GT	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IBM	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Impressions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Infogrames	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Intuit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Krisalis	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lotus	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lucas Arts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maxis	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Microprose	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Microsoft	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mindscape	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mirage	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Novell	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ocean	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Origin	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Probe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Psygnosis	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Renegade	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sage	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
SCI	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sensible Software	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sierra	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sony	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Spectum Holobyte	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Team 17	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Thalion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Time Warner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ubisoft	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
US Gold	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Virgin	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
WordPerfect	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other favourite:

....

ABOUT THE MAGAZINES

42 Where do you usually buy your video games magazines from?

WH Smith ☐
Martins ☐
Tesco ☐
Asda ☐
Safeway ☐
7-Eleven ☐
SuperDrug ☐
Other specialist PC shop ☐
Subscription ☐
John Menzies ☐
Fourbuoys ☐
Sainsburys ☐
Woolworths ☐
Waitrose ☐
Petrol Station ☐
PC World ☐
Local newsagent ☐
Somewhere else:..............................

43 Is your copy of PC Games magazine either:

Saved for you by the newsagent ☐ Or, delivered to you by the newsagent ☐

44 Who pays for the magazine?

You ☐
A friend ☐
A relative ☐

45 How many other people apart from yourself will see your copy of PC Games magazine?

Nobody else ☐
Two ☐
Four ☐
One ☐
Three ☐
Five ☐
More than five (please write in number).............

46 How often do you (1) buy or (2) see (perhaps a friend's copy) of PC Games magazine?

	1: Buy	2: See
Every month	☐	☐
Once every couple of months	☐	☐
Once every three months	☐	☐
Less often	☐	☐

47 How long have you been buying PC Games magazine?

One month ☐
3-6 months ☐
12-18 months ☐
1-3 months ☐
6-12 months ☐

48 Would you ever buy a software program (game/utility) without seeing a review in PC Games magazine?

Yes ☐ No ☐

49 How do you rate PC Games as a computer games magazine? (10 = brilliant, 1 = very poor)

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐
6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐

50 Do you find the technical help in this issue of PC Games:

About right ☐ Too technical ☐ Not technical enough ☐

51 What do you think of the different sections of this issue of PC Games magazine?

	Good	Average	Poor
Covers	☐	☐	☐
Cover disks	☐	☐	☐
Disk pages	☐	☐	☐
News	☐	☐	☐
Previews	☐	☐	☐
Reviews	☐	☐	☐
CD Updates	☐	☐	☐
Budget game reviews	☐	☐	☐
Competitions	☐	☐	☐
Power up (long tips)	☐	☐	☐
Cheat lab (short tips)	☐	☐	☐
Features	☐	☐	☐
Shareware section	☐	☐	☐
Dr Spanner (tech help)	☐	☐	☐
Letters	☐	☐	☐

52 Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following suggestions for PC Games' content:

	Agree	Disagree
● I'd like long reviews to be longer, though there wouldn't be room for so many	☐	☐
● I'd like every new release covered, even if the reviews were quite short	☐	☐
● I'd like to read special columns devoted to areas of gaming, like RPGs, adventures etc	☐	☐
● I'd like to see more hardware coverage	☐	☐
● I'd like to see more features	☐	☐
● I think the design isn't adult enough	☐	☐
● I don't think the look of the cover reflects the content of the magazine inside	☐	☐

53 What other magazines do you normally buy or see, or used to buy but don't any more - and how would you rate each of them out of 10 (where 10 is brilliant and 1 is rubbish)?

Magazine	Buy	See	Used to buy	Rate
PC Answers	☐	☐	☐	___
PC Attack	☐	☐	☐	___
PC Format	☐	☐	☐	___
PC Gamer	☐	☐	☐	___
PC Home	☐	☐	☐	___
PC Power	☐	☐	☐	___
PC Review	☐	☐	☐	___
PC Solutions	☐	☐	☐	___
PC Tactix	☐	☐	☐	___
PC Zone	☐	☐	☐	___
Computer Life	☐	☐	☐	___
CD PowerPlay	☐	☐	☐	___
CD-Rom Games	☐	☐	☐	___
CD-Rom Magazine	☐	☐	☐	___
CD-Rom Now	☐	☐	☐	___
CD-Rom Today	☐	☐	☐	___
CD-Rom User	☐	☐	☐	___
Children's Computing	☐	☐	☐	___
PC Kidz	☐	☐	☐	___
Internet & Comms Today	☐	☐	☐	___
Internet Magazine	☐	☐	☐	___
Net User	☐	☐	☐	___
.net	☐	☐	☐	___
Computer & Video Games (CVG)	☐	☐	☐	___
Edge	☐	☐	☐	___
GamesMaster	☐	☐	☐	___
Gamesworld	☐	☐	☐	___
Ultimate Future Games	☐	☐	☐	___
Sega Magazine	☐	☐	☐	___
Nintendo Magazine System	☐	☐	☐	___
Mean Machines Sega	☐	☐	☐	___
CU Amiga	☐	☐	☐	___
The One Amiga	☐	☐	☐	___

54 How did you first find out about PC Games magazine?

From a friend ☐
From a magazine advertisement ☐
From a TV show ☐
From a leaflet in a hardware or software purchase ☐
Somewhere else, namely:..
In a newsagent ☐
At an exhibition ☐
From a radio ad ☐

55 If you could change one thing about PC Games magazine to make it better what would it be?

....

....

IF YOU WANT TO BE INCLUDED IN THE PRIZE COMPETITION, MAKE SURE YOU FILL IN THE COUPON BELOW:

56 Your name:.. Your address: ....

....

....

IMPORTANT. **Finally, if you DO NOT wish to recieve further information on future PC products and services please make sure you tick this box** ☐

NOW post the completed Survey as soon as possible to: PC Games Reader Survey, Emap images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Once again, thank you for your help.

LETTERS

Come on, don't be shy. Why not air your views by writing to us at: Letters, PC GAMES, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Alternatively, fax us on (0171) 972 6710 or even send the crew an e-mail to: PCREVIEW@CIX.COMPULINK.CO.UK.

The Great Meg Race

Dear PC GAMES

Of all the magazines I've read so far yours is the best, so now I get your mag every month. But during the four months I've been buying PC Games I've noticed a couple of obvious mistakes that I think I should point out to you.

1). In issue 10's Next Month page you showed a new Star Trek: TNG game. When I got issue 11 what's on the cover? Super Street Fighter II Turbo!!! The next month page gave the impression that there would be a review or at least a big preview or Star Trek: TNG, just like you did with Aliens. But all I saw about the game was a 2-page advert, which had nothing to do with the PC Games team.

I know that games do come out suddenly, but there are lots of games that get 90% or over, but they don't always appear on the cover.

2). This gripe isn't so bad. Issue 11's second coverdisk (floppy) game, Darker, said on the disk that it needed a 486 with 4Mb RAM and 590K free. But when I loaded it up onto my 286 with 1Mb RAM and some 590K free, I was surprised to see that the screen went black and the words 'Darker' came up, followed by a weird pinky, blobby screen with the credits showing. It runs very slowly but nevertheless it runs.

I'm wondering about 386 owners with a very long face getting misled when the game actually does run. Anyway, keep up the good work!

Robbie Blake-Coleman,
Salisbury.

The problem we face, as a truly trusting lot, is that we usually presume that the software companies that supply software for both review and coverdisks are as honest as the day is long. Unfortunately, we also find that, on occasion, the machine specifications that have been dictated to us are inaccurate, although this time it seems that this was actually in your favour.

This also applies to when we are offered games for review or preview and the at the last moment the product fails to turn up before the final deadline for the magazine, or if the game slips in it's schedule. Unfortunately it's a never-ending problem (during development games are always encountering unexpected delays), but hopefully one that rarely affects us, or more importantly, you, the trusting reader.

Anyway, thanks for the kind words of encouragement and, as ever, we'll try our very best to keep up the good work. Against the odds!

STARLETTER

Megs-*actly!!*

Dear PC GAMES

I think your magazine is great, but I'm sorry to have to write in to you on a bad note. In the May edition of PC Games you did a good review on 'NBA Live '95', but in the minimum spec box you stated that the game needed 4Mb of RAM to run. So I saved all of my Easter money and paper round money and sent away for the game.

To my dismay though, when I got the game it stated on the box that the minimum spec included 8Mb of RAM for it to run. So now I've gone and wasted all my money on a good game that will not run until I've got another 4Mb of RAM.

As you can imagine this is very frustrating for me as I cannot afford another 4Mb of RAM at the moment. As a reader of your magazine I need to be able to rely on your information on the system requirements.

Craig Beal,
Bangor.

Ah, another problem that derives from exactly what I was talking about in "The Great Meg Race" letter also on this page. The answer from that letter also applies in this case, and all we can do is get down on our bended knees, apologise profusely and then throw ourselves off the very top of Emap Towers in utter humiliation.

There's one other thing that we can do, and that is award you Star Letter of the month and send you a crisp 50 smackers to either pop back into your piggy bank, or go towards a 4Mb upgrade. Once again, soz.

It's Life Jim...

Dear PC GAMES

Ha, ha! Look, I know it says "don't write in" on the bottom of your Next Month page (May '95) but I have to say 'WRONG!' If you have seen the very, very last episode of ST:TNG then you will have heard an ageing Wil Ryker say "Engage — Warp factor 13"! Pah! Warp 10? No problemo!

Archangel Nemesis — AKA KC Rolt,
Cambridge.

There's always one isn't there. Well done, Mr. Nemesis, you win our unnecessary Star Trek gripe of the month. And one word of warning — anything can turn from a pastime or hobby into an obsession, and eventually too much Captain Picard can make you go blind.

Step Back *In Time*

Dear PC GAMES

I read your magazine regularly and I think it is very good. I do, however, think that you could have kept some of your magazine's earlier touches, the ones that made it so unique. Eg. 'Classic Moments In Games' and 'True Stories'. Also I agree with what you said to Simon Nuffield from London in your April issue, a game doesn't need to cost millions and have loads of FMV (like Wing Commander 3) in order to be a hit.

There are lots of good games out there that will work on anything, from a humble 386 to a Pentium 60, ie. Master Of Magic, Doom, Cannon Fodder 1 & 2, Jungle Strike, Discworld, Theme Park, The Settlers and 1942: Pacific Air War. There are many more, as I'm sure you already know.

C. Welhengama,
Liverpool.

Thanks for your comments. It's true that there are good games for slower machins but if software houses didn't program games that pushed PCs to the limit, people would still moan. As ever, any comments criticisms made on content are always gratefully received, and if it's more unique features you're after, keep your eyes peeled for future issues of PC Games.

Dont' Force *Yourself...*

Dear PC GAMES

It's coming... i'm waiting... it's nearly here... just a couple more days... YES... It's here! AT LAST IT'S HERE! DARK FORCES!! Oooooh, thank the Lord!

I, like everyone else in the world, just couldn't wait for the next epic saga in the Star Wars games series. Especially after you guys at PC Games had given it 92% (94%, actually — Dave) and said that the only bad thing about it was that "there just aren't enough hours in the day to play it". Oh, and "the music is a nit naff". No matter, I can handle that. What's a tiny sacrifice for the best game in the world?

I bought it, got home, and started playing. You were right — Absolutely fantastic! Okay, crap music, but absolutely fantastic. I put it on medium difficulty, played, played, and played... And finished it in a week and a bit. I couldn't believe it. After I'd destroyed the Arc Hammer, Darth Vader's looking a bit ratted off, and I'm looking forward to the next mission... Credits? What? Fourteen missions?

That's only one major disappointment. The other two were: 1). Seeing Boba Fett, and then killing him with the assault cannon (I thought he got eaten in Return Of The Jedi?) 2). And on the final level, hearing a big, evil voice saying, "At last I have a worthy opponent... etc.", and pooing my pants thinking it was Darth Vader or the Emperor himself, I turned round... Only to be confronted by yet another Dark Trooper, who met a similar fate to old Boba.

I feel cheated. Come on guys, there must be some hidden levels on the CD or something? Please?

Simon Bradley,
Loughborough.

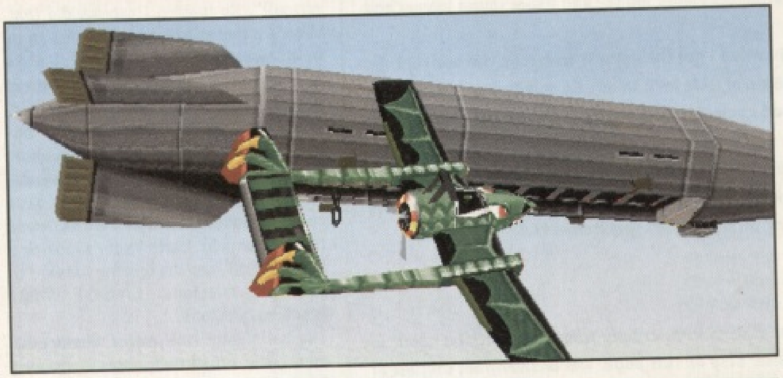
We understand your frustration and realise that as good as Dark Forces is, completing any game in a week can be annoying. But you say that you played it on medium level and there's always been a problem with difficulty levels in games, in my opinion. Basically if you complete a game on anything less that the maximum difficulty, the natural progression would be to start over and go one level up.

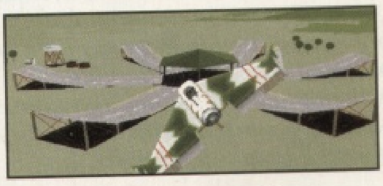
Unfortunately, often the case seems to be that you just don't want to trawl through the game again, when you know how to complete all the puzzles therein. That's why we, at PC Games, usually test a game on the most challenging difficulty level, which will at least give us a good indication of it's ultimate playing time.

That all said, though, we've found that there are some Doom-style Dark Forces .WAD files knocking around at the moment, so expect to see them on future cover disks.

NEXT MONTH

Battle For The Skies!





In the August issue of PC GAMES we'll be bringing you the exclusive demo of Rowan's brilliant new flight sim, Air Power!* Yes, thanks to Mindscape you'll soon be able to climb inside a prop-driven aircraft and dogfight the enemy in this Jules Verne-inspired SVGA epic!

- We'll also have in-depth previews of Cryo's stunning rendered shoot-'em-up Raven Project, as well as glimpsing at Mindscape's rockin' good music adventure, Total Distortion!
- Get ready to bag some swag! If you thought the prizes in issue 10's excellent Aliens competition were good then you'll love the stuff up for grabs in next month's mag, where we'll be giving away even more Giger-related goodies than you can shake a face-hugger at!
- And, as ever, you can always rely on PC GAMES to bring you the most up-to-date news, comprehensive reviews and thorough tips section you'll find this side of Uranus! If you don't believe us, check out the August issue of PC GAMES, on sale June 30th. It's scorching!

* This information is correct at the time of going to press.

Dear newsie,
Will you please, please reserve me next month's issue of PC GAMES. You will? Excellent. Cheers mate!

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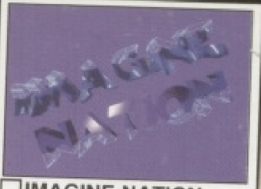

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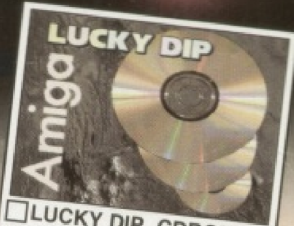

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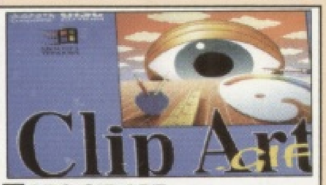

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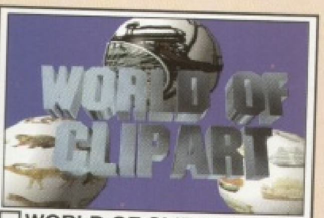

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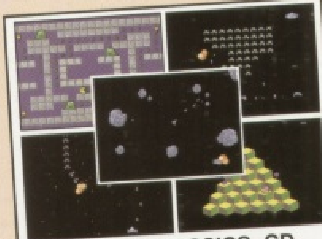

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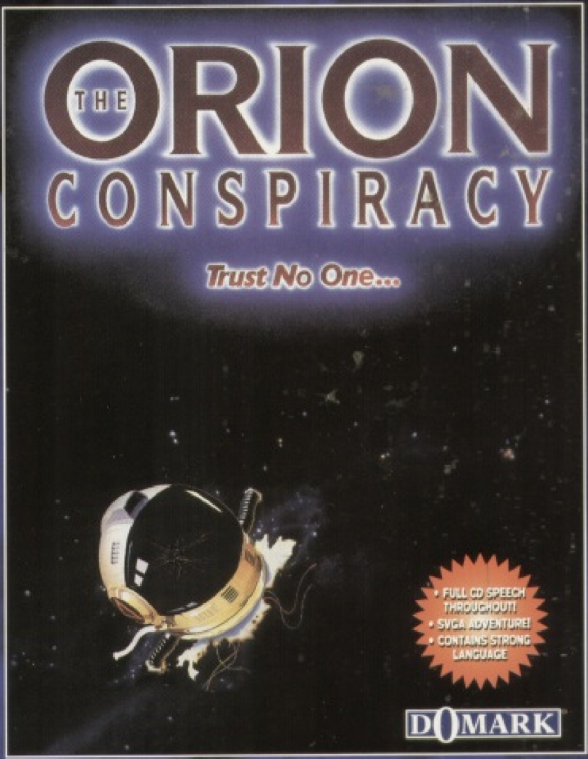

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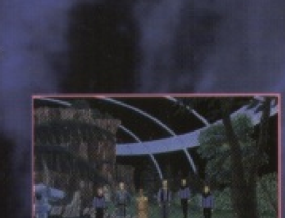

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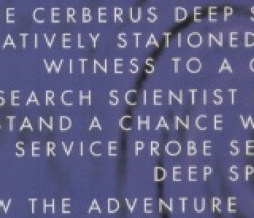

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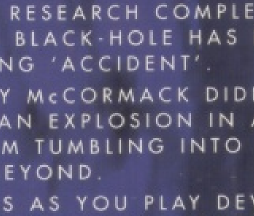

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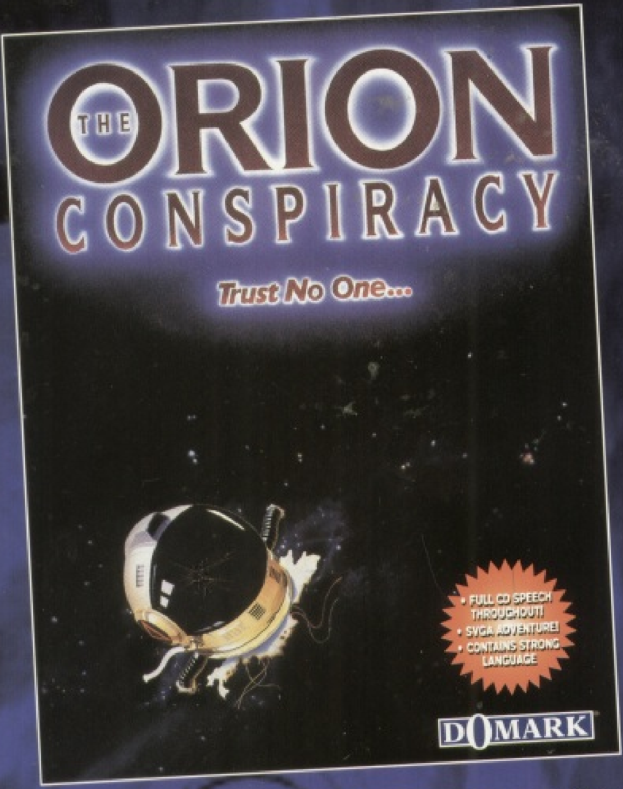

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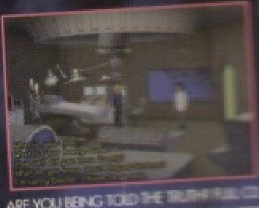

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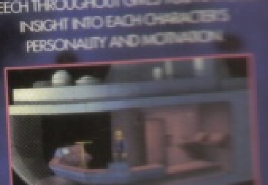

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